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IN THE PALE

STORIES AND LEGENDS OF THE RUSSIAN JEWS

BY

HENRY ILIOWIZI



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TO MY WIFE

**these pages are most affectionately
inscribed**



A WORD TO THE READER

IN explanation of some features of the following tales and of the Russo-Judean genius for story-telling in general, it should be remembered that the tellers of the tales current in Russian Jewry are students of the Talmud, accustomed to the hyperbole characteristic of much of the unique literature to which they devote their lives. It is not too hazardous to say that in point of inventiveness they can vie with the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, and in ideality and moral elevation they far surpass them.

These tales of fact, folklore, and fiction may serve to open a window of the great dungeon wherein at least half of scattered Israel suffers, worships, and dreams. Living in a gloomy present, and ever picturing a golden future; languishing in wretchedness here, while never losing hope in a blessed hereafter, it is a race that has learned to weep and laugh at the same time. Now and

then the scene is tinged with the melodramatic, but it never fails to convey profound faith, deep reverence, lofty morality, proud self-consciousness, and sublime spirituality.

That the Russian Jew is in possession of enough material for tales of woe, needed no demonstration. What the world does not yet appreciate is his optimism, his readiness to laugh at the humorous sides of life, and his ability to make others laugh at them.

THE AUTHOR

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EZRA AND HULDAH

I

THE STAR'S MYSTERIOUS TAIL

TANGIER is held by the Moors to be the most beautiful city of the Eastern hemisphere, and their patriotic conceit is explained by the circumstance that very few of Moslem birth go to the trouble of crossing the Strait to look even at the great fortress of Gibraltar. Indeed, a distant glimpse of the Moorish Paris inclines one to favor the native view of its deceptive magnificence. As your steamer ploughs the water, sunny glories playing around you, your eye is dazzled by the maze of human habitations, bathed in the morning's radiant splendor as they lie spread out on the rising coast, its highest acclivity on the side toward the narrowing strait, through which old Atlantic pours his surplus brine into the historic, song-consecrated Inland Sea. The ag-

glomeration of dwellings is encompassed by a white, irregular wall about eleven feet high, punctuated here and there by a tower and a battlement, as patent evidence of its being a fortress, though a fortress like Jericho, frowning fearfully, but betraying symptoms of being barely able to withstand the blast of a trumpet, as the French demonstrated not very long ago.

Tangier has made a record for herself, is accounted one of the oldest African cities, once was the capital of a kingdom, but is now a faded relic of past glories. As you draw nearer the walls, your look betrays disappointment. What a difference between impregnable Gibraltar, but a few miles behind, and this dilapidated stronghold! If thou art not widowed, fair city, then must thy lord be either drunk or insane. So heaven-favored and so neglected! Here is an illustration of Beauty wedded to the Beast.

Of Gibraltar a poet of Granada says that it is "as a beacon shedding its rays over the multitudinous seas, and rising far

above the neighboring mountains; one would say that its eyes are watching the stars in their heavenly tracks."

After Tarik-Ibn Zeyed landed his aggressive host at the foot of Gibraltar, that famous Tarshish stood many a siege, changed masters many a time, until undaunted Britain transformed it into a dormant, thousand-mouthed dragon, not unprepared to belch forth thousandfold thunder, fire, and death. Iron nerves alone would enable one to endure the deafening bursts of cannon which shake the rock to its centre on Victoria's birthday. Gibraltar honoring royalty conveys a fair idea of sky-compelling Jove shaking the heavens and the abysses with thunder.

Our steamer throws anchor before Tangier. Look at those walls! How mournful! Wide gaps unrepaired, plenty of withered moss and loose rolling stones, nests of swallows, piles of debris, masses of cobweb, rusty cannon of the oldest pattern, unwatched, uncleaned, bearing the indelible marks of decay! Here nature smiles, and man is

wretched. During nine months of the year the climate along the Moorish coast facing Spain is delightful. Yet, notwithstanding the benignity of the skies and the fertility of the soil, man vegetates here in squalor, poverty, and ignorance, the historic trinity of Oriental barbarism. Nature blooms and blossoms in vain. The fig, the cactus, the orange, and the citron grow wild. The groves are delicious when in blossom, Hesperian when loaded with golden fruit, but superstition, fanaticism, and indolence are the chronic plagues of unenlightened Islam, and anarchy is the result.

And who are those bustling people yonder, sunburnt, dark-eyed, black-haired, ragged, shabby; dirty mufflers or caps on their heads; barefoot, feet unwashed and surmounted by sinewy calves; poor fellows, all eagerness to be serviceable? Children of Israel they, whose progenitors Catholic Hispania drove from the land of their birth, the country they dearly loved. Here they are, humble porters on the beach, ready to rush into the water, and bear

traveller and baggage on their shoulders to the shore, destitute of landing-place or wharf. Their eyes gleam at the sight of the silver coin you hand them. They eat the bread of poverty, and have emptied the cup of misery, but are resigned to their sad lot.

We are on land, and as we enter the first precinct of the harbor, we are at once struck by the palpable reality that the fine art of sweeping has not been cultivated hereabout, where things clean and unclean, living and dead, lie pell-mell, undisturbed. A thoughtful donkey, philosophically indifferent to the latest conclusion reached by the evolutionist with regard to his pedigree, gets a vigorous kick from the fortunately unarmed heel of our porter, and he plods on without as much as changing his mien or gait. We are used to this kind of treatment, we poor creatures, he might say, had he the eloquence of Balaam's animal. Poor brute! Yet, compared with the fate of his master, his is the happier life. He has no religion to suffer for. The votaries of the mosque have no tortures for him.

Our trunks are solemnly opened before a tribunal of turbaned Moslems, nobles of long beards and white, flowing garments. One article after the other is carefully examined, and declared free of duty. We are politely dismissed, and proceed to enter the city proper in triumph, astride on a donkey.

In 1874 the inhabitants of Tangier were startled by an appearance in the skies. A comet of enormous size, growing daily in bulk and lustre, amazed Moslem and Jew. Ominous prophecies multiplied as the days advanced, and the "star's tail," as it was popularly called, shot its luminous volume athwart the mysterious empyrean. Every evening thousands of pale faces turned to the celestial wonder. What might it foreshadow? Nothing good, the faithful agreed. Whether it foretold pestilence, war, famine, or the end of the world, even Rabbi Nahon hesitated to decide, and his was the wisest head in the *Mellah* (Jewish quarter). To his wife the venerable sage intimated that the star's tail pointed to the approach of the stirring period of Gog and Magog, the worst

in store for humanity. The good woman gave the information in strict confidence to her several friends, and they confided the secret to their dear ones, so that Gog and Magog was the whisper of the hour and the bugbear of the faithful. Little prophets rose daily; one fancy made room for another, until one morning the Jewish community was thrown into a frenzy of excitement by a something people had never heard of before. This was the cause.

Ben Uliel, a very pious young man, had made it his business, after days of prayer and fasting, to watch the development of the heavenly prodigy. His eyes—so he reported the sight vouchsafed unto him—shortly after midnight discerned a dim light about the outlines of the comet. Soon the bright edge turned crimson, and the central mass shone like the glowing sun. This was followed by a change in shape. The thin end of the comet grew thinner, the other extreme broadened, the whole assuming the form of a perfect trumpet, which flashed upon the eye with the intense beauty of a brilliant

rainbow. Presently there was an outburst of splendor in the background of the starry heavens, whence a power on wings, all glory and radiance, sped forth toward the enormous trumpet. Taking hold of the ethereal instrument, the power filled infinite space with such music as human ears had never heard. When the notes had died away, the trumpet underwent an instantaneous change, assuming the shape of a fiery throne, on which the self-same power, now a crowned might, was seated, sceptre in hand, pointing toward the East. Hereupon a great cry, as of a battling army, stirred the universe with the multitudinous roar: "Rise, Jerusalem; rise, Jerusalem!" Ben Uliel fell upon his face overawed. When he rose, there was nothing but the original star's tail and silence.

The commotion spread from the Jewish to the Moorish population of Tangier. Ben Uliel reported his vision with circumstantial details, which, in the minds of the pious, gave it the significance of a revelation. A trumpet of light, a heavenly monarch, his

sceptre pointing eastward, the cry of "Rise, Jerusalem," what could it signify, if not the coming of the Messiah? Rabbi Nahon said nothing, but he shook his head significantly, which was sufficient to keep pious credulity at fever heat, particularly as his wife had a great deal to say about what she assumed her husband's head-shaking to imply. The resident consuls smiled, but the Pasha took a very serious view of the matter. He sent for Ben Uliel, made him repeat his vision, gave him a present as a token of friendship and respect, looked very grave, and ordered the Jew to be mounted on one of his dark mules and to be escorted home as a man of distinction. In view of the ferocious temper of the fanatic Pasha and his chronic hostility to the Jews, his treatment of Ben Uliel was naturally seen in the light of a confirmation of the approach of the Messianic era.

There was at this time a stranger in Tangier, who seemed to have no eyes for the star's tail, nor for anything around him. The man attracted notice wherever he ap-

peared, but nobody, except Rabbi Nahon, held intercourse with him. Who was he? For once the Rabbi's wife would not say a word, leaving her friends to guess at the identity of the mysterious stranger. He was often seen around the massive lighthouse of Cape Spartel, sometimes on the top of the tower, sending his eye eastward over the huge Pillars of Hercules. "The winds, the winds, who can control the winds!" Nothing else escaped his lips. What was he looking for? What was he thinking of?

Within his horizon lay many a scene of vicissitudinous history to set a contemplative mind thinking. Mount Abyla to his right, Mount Calpe to his left, round which olden memories cluster, are rocks dear to the races that rule, well known to the ancients, the Phœnicians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Carthaginians. Mutability is writing her decrees everywhere save in the stars and the soul of man. What waves of humanity, since the fabled catastrophe of Atlantis, have not swept athwart yonder Strait! Here races struggled for suprem-

acy. The worshippers of Baal and Astarte, those of Jupiter, of the Unity, and the Trinity—here they strove to leave an indelible record of their activity. The pitched battles fought between Rome and Carthage, Rome and the dreaded Celtiberi, Rome and the Vandal, Rome and the Frank, formed but a prelude to the yet fiercer combats which, for eight centuries, raged between Goth and Arab, beginning with the fall of Don Roderick, the last Gothic king, and closing with the overthrow of Boabdil, the last Moorish prince of Granada. What material for a great epopee!

But the stranger gave those phantoms of the past no thought. To him history was a blank. In his hand he held a telegram signed "Ezra and Huldah." This he read again and again, each time adding the refrain: "The winds, the winds, who can control the winds!"


On his way to the gate of the city, he continued to soliloquize disconnectedly, always winding up with "The winds, the winds, who can control the winds!" Of whom, of

what did he speak? The soliloquy referred to "my sweetest child and that superb youth." With them was linked "that godly Messenger of Zion whom Almighty sent to the rescue of my daughter." Before we learn about the "child" and the "youth," we must know somewhat of the Messenger of Zion.

At certain times a Messenger from the Holy Land is expected to appear in the remotest Jewish communities of Europe, where free contributions are offered for the support of the pious men and women who spend their last days in the land of promise. The person of the Messenger is invested with such reverence as good Catholics associate with the Papal Legate. The young and the old gather around the picturesque figure, eager to shake the emissary by the hand, to get a good look at his Oriental attire, and above all, to hear what he deigns to communicate about things in the God-consecrated regions; about the tombs of the prophets; about the Cave of Machpelah, wherein the patriarchal

couples are entombed; about the relic of Zion's fallen Sanctuary, at which the faithful gather to pray and weep over the destruction of God's own city; and about the fox which yearly bounds over the ruin on Moriah on the anniversary of the Temple's fall.

As a rule, the Messenger knows how to satisfy these innocent cravings of devout souls, and he manages to hold his hearers spell-bound by his tales of wonder. However incredible the story, nobody doubts the Messenger's word. The Messenger has favors to bestow, and they may be secured for a consideration. In his possession are small bags filled with the sand of the hallowed soil. Placed under the head of the dead, it is believed to protect the body from decomposition. Inexhaustible like the chips of the "genuine cross" sold to votaries by saintly monks, the quantity of the coveted material distributed by the Messenger to his favored friends would justify the supposition that he has a cargo of Moriah's earth at his disposal. The man is



above suspicion, however, and the happy owner of the post-mortem head-rest feels like the ancient Pharaoh at the sight of his pyramid sepulchre.


This little business the Messenger does on his own account. His recognized mission is to get the contents of the tin boxes conspicuously placed in almost all Jewish homes and emptied periodically only by authorized persons. Into the slots of these boxes goes every coin saved for the sake of sweet charity. Before the Jewess lays her hands on her eyes preliminary to the blessing of the Sabbath candles, followed by the blessing uttered over the heads of her children, a coin or two is dropped into the box. A capacious receptacle is put up in each synagogue for the same purpose. The Messenger is entrusted with the sum total, there being no doubt of his integrity, and he is dismissed with heartiness, as he was received and entertained with unstinted hospitality.

The Messenger of Zion referred to by the stranger was not of the common type, as

will become manifest when we are familiar with his nature.

It was considered a singular coincidence that, while the star's tail was the all-absorbing topic of conversation and speculation, it transpired that the Messenger of Zion was on his way to Tangier. His coming was one of those important secrets which the Rabbi entrusted to his wife, and she to her confidential friends. The good woman expected the Messenger with unusual anxiety, an anxiety shared by her beauteous daughter, Donna, who corresponded with Zemach Ben David in purest Hebrew on the tenderest of subjects. The romantic relation dated back to a previous occasion, when the youthful Zemach had passed the happiest fortnight of his life under the Rabbi's roof. This was the Messenger to whom the stranger referred.

The stranger was a new friend of the spiritual head of the *Mellah*, a new-comer in the place, and much whispered of as an odd individual. The man looked as though he had long ago been taken half-broken from



the wheel of torture, and restored to a deformed existence. Though his limbs seemed out of joint, he was tall and massive in frame. His lower jaw was distorted and pointed, and it protruded to a line with his crooked nose, which was surmounted by heavy eyebrows, blending into one streak of grizzly hair across his countenance. They were almost as bushy as the untended mustache, which barely covered the upper of a pair of thick lips, swelling and spreading at the least effort to utter speech. The whole was redeemed by two large, deep, black eyes, never to be forgotten when seen once, and an appealing rather than repellant expression; in all, a physiognomy bearing lines of great suffering, and calling forth reverent sympathy in the observer.

It was early in the morning. During the night the rain had descended in torrents, and there was no break in the clouds even at this hour. On the shore the unfailing porter was represented in great numbers, his experienced eye fixed on a speck far away in the hazy atmosphere above the surge.

"She is coming in," said one to his fellow.

"Yes, it is she," replied the one spoken to.

"Is that not Rabbi Nahon and the stranger?" observed another of the porters in a tone of wonder, as the two figures emerged from the gate of the fortress.

"The Messenger of Zion arrives on board that vessel," was the explanation given.

The venerable Nahon was a man in the seventies, well preserved, prophetic in look, a stately presence of earnestness and dignity. His rare appearance on the shore could not fail to attract attention, but the crowd kept at a respectful distance.

"That is our steamer," said the sage to the stranger.

"If I do not fall dead before that vessel drops anchor, I shall praise the Lord forever for having granted me this length of days," returned the stranger with suppressed emotion. "I am trembling from head to foot."

"Control your feelings, Señor, we are not unobserved," said the Rabbi appealingly.

"The winds, the winds, who can control the winds!" exclaimed the stranger.

"He who controls the ocean and all the spheres, controls the winds, Señor. The ship will not be in for a full hour, and you are too weak to stand thus waiting. Why not expect their coming under your roof or mine?" asked Nahon.

"What, not receive my child, my children?" cried the stranger, tears rolling down his wrinkled cheeks.

"This is just what I apprehended, Señor Pekarow. You stood well the pressure of sorrow, you may break down under the reaction. And then this dampness, which the doctor advised you to avoid," remarked the Rabbi.

"Thank you, Señor, I might as well leave this earth as take my eyes from that vessel. Reuben Pekarow has nerves of iron, sinews of steel, and a heart of immortal fire, or he would have been dead and buried long ere this. My child and her friends will be taken to my home by both of us," was the firm reply.

"The Messenger of Zion has always been my guest, Señor; my wife and daughter

would not have it otherwise," protested Nahon gently.

"Zemach agreed that my home should be his hereafter. The young man is the crown of human nobility. Give my gratitude a chance. You owe him nothing, Señor, I owe him everything," asserted Pekarow in his emphatic way.

"We are all indebted to him for the hardships he endures in the interest of our brethren in the Holy Land. Zemach Ben David is a type. Nothing adorns the blossom of youth more than its association with the mature virtue of age. Such is the case in him. He loves my humble brethren, therefore do I love him. As to your right to harbor him during his stay in Tangier, let us agree to let him have his will," proposed Nahon, sure that the attraction was in his house. "And there the sun is out to bid our guests welcome," added the Rabbi cheerfully.

"Guests to you, Señor, but the essence of hope to me," said Reuben pathetically.

As soon as the vessel threw anchor, a

small fleet of boats besieged the steamer, while a crowd of lusty porters rushed into the water to help the passengers on land. Pekarow's eager eye soon discerned the objects of his affection.

"My daughter, my daughter, there she is, there they are," cried he, in a delirium of joy. "She sees me, she recognizes me, the blessed child."

"Yes, I see Zemach Ben David and two others," confirmed Nahon, not unmoved by the agitation of his friend.

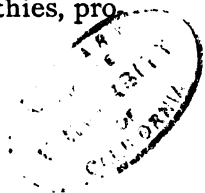
The craft held in readiness by two men to do the bidding of Reuben Pekarow shot forth like an arrow as soon as he had pointed out the three persons to be landed. The next moment a tall young lady under a veil, accompanied by two stately young men, one in Oriental garb, was lowered into the boat. Nahon seized Pekarow by the arm, beseeching him to subdue his excitement, for the man was on the point of running into the water to meet the boat. In a minute the craft touched sand, and Reuben Pekarow caught up his daughter with a yell that sent

a shiver through every heart.—“My child, my daughter, my daughter!”—The girl threw her arms around the neck of the raving parent, responding with an outburst of tears, too contagious to be resisted by men familiar with sorrow. Nahon extended a hearty welcome to the Messenger of the Holy Land, who introduced his companion, Ezra Amitin. Reuben embraced each one in turn, his tears flowing. The dramatic scene was cut short by Nahon, who hurried the party to their conveyance within the gate, ready to take them to Pekarow's house.

Reuben Pekarow's residence was a fine building, rented and furnished for the accommodation of the girl and her companions. The door was opened by an elderly woman, whose exclamation of joy was followed by kisses and weeping.

“Huldah, darling Huldah! A little older, sweetest girl, but beautiful, child, as beautiful as when I nursed you years and years ago.”

In the afternoon Rabbi Nahon, accompanied by several of the local worthies, pro-



ceeded to the house of the stranger to honor Zemach Ben David, and welcome the others. With awe and wonder they listened to what the Messenger of Zion told, as a manifestation of Providential rule and retribution. So deeply impressed was the hoary Rabbi by the events related to him by the Messenger, that he made them the subject of an homiletic discourse on the following Sabbath.

II

A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

Far away from the benignant clime of northwestern Africa, in the heart of the land of the knout and of Siberian horrors, lies Tchernigoff, the capital of the province of the same name. The macadamized highway from Moscow to Kieff passes through the city, and the Desna flows about a mile away from its suburbs. Tchernigoff has nothing to distinguish it in the annals of the Czar's vast domains. Poorly built, unpaved, badly lighted, unclean, with no favors to thank

nature for, except a small park, and no comforts to mark the progress of the century, the unlovely metropolis is inhabited by a drowsy population of over twenty thousand souls. One-third are Jews, the rest are of the Greek Catholic Church. There are two old cathedrals, a number of churches and chapels, four synagogues, a dilapidated fortress, and a large insane asylum. Numerous ruins in and around the city remind one of the Mongolian invasion.

Tchernigoff had been bitterly fought for by Lithuania, Poland, and the Ukraine, before the Cossack entrusted it to the paternal guardianship of the Czar, whose icy grip reduced its pulsations to a tempo ranging between intermittent fever and dreamless somnolence. The sluggish drowsiness of life's monotonous drudgery continues therein year in, year out, except when Muscovite strategy puts battalions in motion. Then, being an administrative centre, Tchernigoff teems with brilliant uniforms, and rings with martial music and military salutes.

Tchernigoff was Reuben Pekarow's native

place. His father, a watchmaker, having formed a lofty idea of medicine and jurisprudence, cherished the ambition of seeing his son among professional men. His motive was not love for the sciences. The watchmaker was heard to express his conviction that "lawyers and doctors need no capital, are highly honored, do little, and coin money." Of Æsculapius old Pekarow knew nothing, but he remembered well the big bill he had had to pay the doctor after his wife's death. That inclined his mind in favor of medicine. But had not Moses been the greatest lawyer on earth? And had not God Himself presented the son of Amram with the chips from the tables of the testimony, the most precious jewels in the universe? Moreover, to dissect bodies was hardly a fit office for an Aaronite, and Pekarow traced his lineage to the first High Priest. These considerations led Pekarow to the final conclusion that his Reuben was destined to practise law.

Reuben justified the most sanguine anticipations of his father. The boy showed

great thirst for knowledge, and was a favorite with his teachers. But he early betrayed a tendency towards skepticism and a strong inclination to stay away from the synagogue. At the age of thirteen, however, Reuben, according to time-honored custom, was called up to the Law on a Sabbath in the presence of the congregation, and, after pronouncing the benediction, was declared a member of the community of Israel. The ceremony made no impression on the boy. He had by this time been promoted to the higher grade in the gymnasium. He spent his days with non-Jewish comrades, and, though resenting the gibes freely lavished on his race, felt his Jewish descent to be a burden and a barrier. At the same time his talents met with due recognition, and his graduation at the high-school opened the door of the university in Kieff for him. After three years of close study he left that institution with high honors, and was then admitted to the bar.

Pekarow was not a rich man, but he economized for the benefit of his only son, so that when he died, shortly after Reuben's return

to Tchernigoff, he left the young attorney a modest competence to begin with. The only wish he uttered on his death-bed was: "My son, do not marry too early, and choose a wife from a God-fearing family, or you will never be happy." Reuben promised to honor his father's wish.

Legal talent being scant in the provincial metropolis, Reuben soon acquired local renown. At the age of twenty-six he stood at the head of the bar in his birthplace. His faith alone was an obstacle to governmental promotion, but it did not seriously impede his progress toward reputation and wealth.

Stenko Yablow was the name of the lawyer who defended a case against one of Reuben's clients. The litigation involved millions, and the contest between the attorneys was unusually bitter, the matter having come to be looked upon by the legal men of the city as a test of professional superiority. Defeat in this case implied material loss, and, what is much worse, public humiliation for the beaten man. Reuben secured the verdict for his client, and Yablow

considered himself a greatly humiliated man—humiliated, too, by a Jew. Hereafter Yablow's entire being was absorbed by one intense passion—vengeance on the Jew. Yablow was wealthy and influential, which made him a dangerous adversary. Reuben was aware of the desperate nature of his enemy, but all his attempts at dignified reconciliation failed.

The first manifestation of Yablow's acrimony was an advertisement in the local paper, that he would hereafter not degrade his orthodox soul by entering into a contest with a descendant of deicides. This was followed up by a number of anonymous articles, wherein the Jews were attacked ferociously, and charged with an assortment of crimes, including the use of Christian blood for ritual purposes. Fortunately, the bulk of the people could not read, so that no immediate harm resulted from the poisoned shafts aimed at the helpless Jews.

Meanwhile Reuben was very happy in his choice of a consort, and was blessed by the birth of a boy as beautiful as the youthful

mother. In his profession Reuben stood head and shoulders above his competitors, and his legal advice was sought by clients from outside of the city. Yablow's hatred of the Hebrew jurist appeared to have died, for years passed, and nothing occurred to warn Reuben that an act of hostility was contemplated by his enemy. Yablow was rarely seen at court, and was often out of town for months. The Hebrew, on the other hand, pursued his vocation with marked success, spending every spare hour with his wife and child. The boy flourished, reached the age of four, a flower of beauty and intelligence, and there was no happier couple in the world than Reuben Pekarow and his wife, whose charms were idolized with such religious ardor as transformed the home of the skeptic into a temple and his table into an altar. Reuben learnt to respect prayer, and this was much.


One day Nachom, the child of the house, did not return from his daily walk with his Christian nurse, who had had charge of him since his tender infancy. It was night-

fall; it became night; the darkness of ominous apprehension settled on the alarmed parents; the child and the nurse were gone. The evening advanced, the police were notified, the night passed, the sun rose on a home of desolation and despair. Nurse and child had disappeared. Rewards were offered, city and suburbs were searched; in vain, not a trace was found, as though the earth had swallowed woman and child. Day followed day, the parents lived in an agony of suspense. Weeks ran into months; the autumn was followed by winter, the spring-tide was near, but no clue was found to account for the disappearance of the woman and her charge. What had become of them? This was a question nobody could answer. In his heart Reuben felt that Yablow had had something to do with his great loss, but he dared not give utterance to his suspicion, and his anguish had to be suppressed in face of the delicate state of the health of his wife, who was yearning for her first-born son.

Passover arrived, bringing new joy to the house of Pekarow. Had little Nachom been

found? No! But a new life, a daughter, came, a cherub to soothe the aching hearts of the disconsolate family. It was a great joy tempered by great sorrow.

At this time a rumor spread in the city that, when the tide had cleared the Desna of ice, a woman had been found entangled in the wood-work of the long bridge that spans the river about two miles from Tchernigoff, in the direction of Kieff. Reuben was one of the first to hurry to the scene. The drowned woman was identified as poor Barbara, the nurse who had disappeared with little Nachom. Who had drowned the Christian woman? Who but the Jews? Do they not use Christian blood to prepare their unleavened cakes? This cry was raised by Yablow, and echoed by a priest, who took up the matter before the police had had time to look into it. An infuriated mob descended on the house of Reuben, howling, and raving, and clamoring: "The Jews have killed her—they have drunk her blood—tear down the house of the Jew—kill the Jew!"



A shower of stones shattered every window. Reuben happened to be out, unaware of the peril that hovered over his wife and babe. Friends came in time to save the infant, which was found alive in the arms of its dead mother. A stone had struck the head of Reuben's wife, who had shielded the child with her body. Reuben Pekarow appeared on the scene to receive his share of the mob's fury. The police rescued him broken and bleeding, all but dead. Many other Jewish houses were wrecked and despoiled.

For months Reuben was thought to be beyond recovery. When, after long suffering, it was possible for him to leave his bed, he stood there a wreck of his former self, a caricature in body, a cynic in mind, a misanthrope in heart. Was not humanity a prodigious herd of wild beasts? That carnivorous biped, man, how he hated him! And what had he to live for? His wife's grave, alas, his wife's grave! Ay, and the baby. Between the graveyard and the cradle that held his motherless infant Reuben's time and

heart were divided. He neither wept nor smiled. The tears seemed to have congealed in his eyes, hanging therein unshed. Not until angelic Huldah blessed him with her first smile did his agony find articulate speech. Yes, the babe was alive. She needed his care. Love asserted its sway, and life claimed its own.

Time, the healer of wounds, the soother of pains, restored Reuben to a degree of self-composure, though never to happiness, his memories being too dark to be brightened or effaced. Yet Huldah's inexpressible loveliness, her tremulous voice heard in the articulation of prayer, the mystic glow in her eyes, which harbored a heaven of sweetness for him whom she was destined to love, poured healing into Reuben's heart. Whatever charm art and culture could add to her native beauty, the prodigal father secured for his child, regardless of cost. Hers was the house, and she the inspiring soul thereof. Her laugh, her song, her touch of the piano's keyboard, her kiss, made summer in the breast of an idolizing parent. Her pro-

fessors of music and foreign languages assured Reuben that there was enough of the princess in his daughter to grace a royal palace, as though he had had any doubt of it.

When the girl completed her sixteenth year, she stood in the exuberance of feminine grace, every inch a Hebe. Perfectly unaffected, unconscious of her bewitching loveliness, she looked into the beholder's eye with a dreamy gaze as mysterious as the azure, as deep and as calm. Her look distracted her admirers, who nicknamed her "the angelic Lilith." Her speech was a succession of sweet notes. Whoever heard her sing stood as if petrified by her voice, flowing, swelling, and melting, seizing heart and soul, sounding the unfathomed deeps of human woe, a power superhuman, sweeter than the song of nightingale and holier than prayer. Gentle as she appeared, her external appearance gave no idea of her intensity of temperament, her dynamic energy slumbering like a dormant volcano. Of stately build, tastefully dressed, of a complexion

such as painters are wont to give to the graces, Huldah impressed romantic minds as the fairy of an enchanted castle. She had inherited the reverence and piety of a noble mother, and she combined in her nature the two rare extremes of masculine fearlessness and feminine delicacy.

Before Huldah had reached her nineteenth year, she was forced to make a determined stand against the intrusive *Shadchan*, whom she treated with scorn. Nor did overtures, made by families of standing anxious to capture the maiden's heart for a cherished youth, meet with more encouragement. The girl had a mind of her own, and her will was the Supreme Court in Reuben's household. The only reason for wishing to see his daughter married were the pester-ing attentions paid her by certain distinguished officers of the army, who had the impudence to bow to her whenever they chanced to meet her in the street. One of these was General Greboff, whose residence faced that of Reuben. There was nothing to be done but to treat the intruders with

contempt, and this nobody understood better than Huldah, who knew how to avoid unpleasant meetings, and not to notice those she could not avoid. Her father felt uneasy, however, and at her request he furnished her with a pocket revolver.

A noteworthy incident in the life of the Jews in Tchernigoff at the date we are speaking of was the arrival of a famous young *Chazan*, who was destined to play an important part in the domestic concerns of Reuben Pekarow. Ezra Amitin had barely passed his twenty-third year when fame declared him the greatest man of his calling in Russian Jewry. The singing and chanting in the synagogue he raised to the dignity of art, and he performed his sacred functions with a power of soul thitherto unknown. His influence over those whom he led in worship could not be excelled by magic. As a rule the Russian *Chazan* has a chorus to accompany him. Amitin was himself a chorus, yea, an orchestra, all centred in a throat that gave forth every note of the gamut to perfection. Simple-minded people maintained that Ezra

Amitin's larynx was lined with golden chords. He put a new meaning into every Hebrew syllable. With him recitation meant pouring out the spirit of the Hebraic poet or prophet on the enchanted audience. Whether he read or sang, it was felt that he told the great tale of Israel's triumph and martyrdom. The congregation followed him in tears or in ecstasy, according to the purport of the recital. Youth, good humor, a certain degree of culture and refinement, personal magnetism, and fertility of imagination, which insured for him the reputation of a consummate story-teller, combined to make the youthful *Chazan* a welcome guest in every distinguished family, so that even Reuben Pekarow was attracted by his personality.

Amitin's first performance in the most aristocratic synagogue of Tchernigoff struck the congregation with astonishment. No mocking-bird could have imitated every variety of note produced by nature or art with greater accuracy than the wonderful *Chazan*. It was noticed that he possessed

the ventriloquist's faculty of singing with lips closed, a feat the immortal Weintraub could not have performed. Furthermore, Weintraub, of blessed memory, used to swim in perspiration while officiating, and had to change his clothing after the service, every article of his wear being as greasy as though it had been stewed in a saucepan. Amitin, on the contrary, caused others to perspire, keeping himself as cool and dry as a windy autumn day. Something within him did the work, and that something was the puzzle of the wisest heads. It was the next thing to a miracle, and the youth was the cynosure of the community.

As Amitin happened to arrive in the city shortly before the great Holy Days, he was offered inducements to stay and officiate on the New Year and the Day of Atonement. Reuben was strongly impressed by the endowments of the youth, and, being a power in the synagogue, he craved the honor of harboring the *Chazan* under his roof. His secret motive was Huldah's pleasure, for she was both religious and musical.

In earlier years Reuben had adorned himself with the colorless feathers of morbid skepticism. Misfortune had opened his eyes to the vanity of things transitory. He had moments of serious meditation, while Huldah's ardor in matters sacred was contagious enough to turn a heathen into an observing Jew.

Therefore, a formal invitation was extended to the *Chazan* to take up his quarters in Reuben Pekarow's commodious home, and the proffered hospitality met with due appreciation. The fact is that somebody had whispered into Amitin's ear that he was going to be near a peerless maiden, but she was described as very haughty and inaccessible, all of which tended to raise his curiosity.

Reuben bade a cordial welcome to his guest, installed him in one of the best rooms of his house, and urged him to make himself perfectly at home. From his windows Amitin could look out upon the trees and the green of a spacious yard guarded by high walls, and adorned by a few irregular beds of

flowers, somewhat withered by the cool nights of approaching autumn. To one of the branches a parrot was chained. The bird shook its head drowsily, when aroused by a whistle from a lower window, followed by a laugh, which electrified the *Chazan*. "Sing: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do!" To this call of the sweetest feminine voice the bird responded instantly, repeating the notes parrot-like to the great delight of the prompter. The laugh and the voice vibrated in Amitin's ear. He looked at his watch to see if the hour fixed for his first meal in Reuben's house had come; it was time for him to go down, and the next moment he found himself before the ideal of his dreams.

Amitin's first meeting with Huldah meant to him either nameless felicity or self-destruction. It was the old story of Adam and Eve, with no Milton to immortalize the divine madness without which Eden is a desert. The *Chazan's* peace of soul was gone. If, up to this time, he had swayed the heart of everyone within reach of his voice, love

infused into his breast tenderness so eloquent and appealing that it proved as resistless as the song of the Sirens. His worship of God was intensified by his worship of Huldah. It was a fusion of fiery love with ardent devotion.

On New Year and on the Day of Atonement the Jewish liturgy recites the world's grandest epic, enacted by Israel during a career of four thousand years. The service is priestly, poetic, and prophetic, and its transcendental elements overtop all philosophy. Divine grandeur is contrasted with human insignificance; the immutable is held up in the face of earthly change and mortality. Providence is traced in the world's annals. The Jew's mission is emphasized. Mankind is prayed for. Great historic events, happy and sad, are rehearsed with joy, or referred to with pious resignation. What an opportunity for a melodious voice to touch every chord on the responsive harp of the Jewish heart! Yea, centuries of agony and anguish, of tears and triumph, are treasured in the traditional songs un-


known beyond the walls of the hoary Synagogue.

Amitin's interpretation of text and melody showed him to be a master in the *Chazan's* calling. The portion of the service wherein the giving of the Law is reviewed on New Year, he rendered with dramatic vividness, so intense that the worshippers thought that they saw Horeb in flames and all the incidents of the Sinaitic revelation. Similar was the impression he produced by reciting the Temple Service on the Day of Atone-ment. No wonder that the people raved over the youthful *Chazan*. Only a few enjoyed the privilege of meeting him at Reuben's house. The hospitable jurist thought it his duty to entertain his guest, but he himself and his friends were entertained instead. The great feature of the social gathering were the thrilling duets sung by the *Chazan* and the daughter of the house, varied by talk about the newest local sensation, the recent return of Dinka Edelberg and her son from Moscow and her remarkable adventure. The heroine was

present, and her presence was of dimensions not to be overlooked. .

Dinka Edelberg was a widow in the fifties, a woman of great courage and self-sacrifice, and of a circumference which made it hard for another person to pass by her side through an ordinary door. She believed in miracles, and protected herself against evil spirits by a number of amulets, which she knew how to associate with a stirring story, bearing on what she considered the triumph of her life. Pointing to the tooth of a wolf set in silver, and used as a breast-pin, she caused the blood of the company to run cold through their veins by telling them how she had come into possession of the lupine ornament.

It should be stated that Dinka Edelberg was entitled to special consideration mainly on account of her truly heroic effort to rescue her idiotic son from his sad lot in the army, into which, under the iron rule of Nicholas the Cruel, he had been drafted at the age of fourteen. The boy's idiocy made his military master despair of ever teaching



him how to tell his right arm from his left. In vain poor Isaac received his full share of the birch rod. The creature was a perfect simpleton, and finally became an object of pity even to his hard-hearted *batchuska*. That made it possible for Dinka to attempt her child's liberation, but it could not be effected without a vast deal of petitioning, praying, hoping, and waiting, not to mention the bribes handed in the shape of presents to those in authority. "Yes," she said to one of the gathering, as she glanced at her cheap little silver watch, "the one set with diamonds, which my poor husband bought for me shortly before he died, I begged Colonel Tukatchoff to accept as a remembrance, you know, or I should never have seen my Isaac in our synagogue."

Jacob Edelberg, Dinka's late husband, was remembered as a wealthy dealer in grain and an enthusiastic Kabbalist. With his last breath he promised his wife to be with her in spirit, whenever she invoked his help. Dinka was successful in all her undertakings, and she ascribed her success to the

constant guardianship of her lamented husband, in accordance with the notions current in Slavonic Israel and far beyond its bounds. The woman was sure that her departed consort was with her, and on this occasion she justified her conviction by telling a thrilling experience she had had on her way from Moscow to Tchernigoff.

"Speak of wonders!" she began. "We left Moscow as soon as my child was delivered to me, that was two days after my interview with the Governor, who shook my hand, and said: 'Dinka, you are a brave woman.' I trembled from head to foot, my heart palpitated, and I was not at all sorry when the police ordered me to leave the city before sunset, no Jewess being allowed to stay there longer than her permit specifies.

"It was a December evening, bitter cold, and a snow-storm set in as the open sleigh which I had hired passed through the suburbs of Moscow. The driver, a powerful Russian, had a double-barrelled gun with him. He loaded it carefully, and filled a small leather bag with shot. I did not like

to have the gun near me in the sleigh, but he reassured me, adding that we might be glad to have the weapon with us. Two spirited horses had carried us easily along the highway for about twenty versts beyond the city, when I noticed a number of lights, as of a hundred lanterns, flitting about in the darkness of a snowy night. The horses pricked up their ears and shuddered. I did not realize our danger until I heard the driver invoke the assistance of his saints, and saw him repeatedly make the sign of the cross. 'At least fifty of the savage beasts,' murmured he, drawing forth his gun, and preparing to fire.

"'Fifty wolves!' exclaimed I in terror.

"'Fully fifty. I can kill off a score of them. If their flesh gluts the others, we shall reach the next hostelry alive; if not, the Lord be gracious unto us. Here, hold the reins, the horses will not bolt,' said the Russian quietly.

"Bang, bang! There were too many of the hungry brutes for one shot to miss them. One fell after the other, but the pack seemed

to grow rather than to dwindle, and the carcasses were devoured by them in less time than it takes to tell. The man loaded again and again, no discharge ever missing its aim. The horses kept close to each other, snorting and tearing away at break-neck speed. The fiery eyes grew less and less. Suddenly, as we approached a bridge which we had to cross, we lighted on another pack of wolves, fully as numerous as the one which we hoped to have escaped, but which came up with us the next moment.

“‘We are lost; my bag is empty!’ cried the Russian, seizing the reins and giving the horses free play. We swept over the bridge like the wind, the beasts close at our heels. I threw my arms around my terrified child, and fervidly invoked the spirit of my husband to help us in our distress. Our situation was desperate. The wolves outran the horses, trying to cut us off, and there was no refuge in sight. The good horses tore away like a storm, but the end appeared to be near, when I heard the Russian exclaim: ‘Jesus and Mary!’ A glance to our right

revealed an apparition that filled me with amazement. Beside our sleigh, mounted on a magnificent black steed, noiselessly galloped a majestic figure, brandishing a flashing blade of steel, which sent forth a shower of sparks like a rocket. Horse and rider skimmed over the soft snow, leaving no trace of a hoof on the surface. In a moment the wolves fell back and vanished. The glimmer of a bright window and the barking of a dog assured us of the shelter we had prayed for. Our ghostly escort slackened pace, allowing the horses to gain on it. On turning my head backward, I found that it was gone.

“‘St. Elia has saved our lives, Jewess,’ said the driver, as we entered the friendly inn. Grateful tears filled my eyes. I said nothing in reply, but I knew that my poor husband had been with us. He has never failed me when I have invoked him—never in danger, as, for instance, in the second miracle of my life,” closed the woman insinuatingly.

Had Dinka's assertions in this narrative

been questioned, the company would have been doomed to listen to a phantasmagoric sketch of what she termed the "second miracle" of her life, her recent escape from the horns of a vicious animal. Dinka derived her sustenance from a dairy. In the pinched state of Russo-Judean life in the smaller places, a cow is a source of plenty and of some revenue. In those regions meat is not tasted from Sabbath to Sabbath, and milk, cheese, and butter are, next to rye-bread, the staple articles of food. But not everyone enjoys the blessing of having even a goat, the next good thing to a cow, so that small dairies insure a sufficient income to account for their frequency. The trouble in their case is the *Shabbes-Goye*, or non-Jewish assistant, called in to milk the animals on the Sabbath. As a rule, the *Shabbes-Goye* needs watching, not alone because she has a *kosher* article in trust, without being trusted, but more on account of the alarming tendency of valuable trinkets to disappear the moment she passes through a room. Nor has it been found expedient to

charge her with larceny, and take her before the *ispravnik*, or chief of police. This would not pay at all.

Now, Dinka had a number of trinkets in her house, and she needed the services of the *Shabbes-Goye*. Dinka did like her neighbors; she had an eye on the *Goye*, following her like her shadow. Unfortunately cows are not the most reasonable of creatures, as the pious woman learned to her chagrin. For, as she entered her stable on a Sabbath, close upon her *Goye's* heels, she incurred the displeasure of her finest cow, an animal of the Ukraine, and the brute lost no time in manifesting distaste for Dinka's gaudy attire in her own way. What the woman dimly remembered was a shock, flight through the air, and descent on a stack of hay. The hay was soft, so was Dinka, who came off with nothing worse than a great fright and the loss of half of her dress. One-half of her Sabbath garment remained in the undisputed possession of the animal, which seemed to be conscious of her trophy. The *Goye* was in a hurry to seek

shelter where all heroic bull-fighters find safety, that is, behind a wall. Thereafter Dinka, having recovered from her shock, affirmed that she had seen the shadowy figure of her late husband interpose itself between her and the infuriated brute, and she embellished her account so extravagantly that even her most credulous friends hesitated to accept her statement without due allowance for an overheated fancy.

Whether to escape a rehash of her "second miracle" or to introduce an experience of his own, Reuben remarked that it was fortunate that there had been no werewolves in the packs they had escaped. The woman opened her eyes wide, astonished that she had never thought of the likelihood. "Who knows that there was none?" asked Dinka in a voice of challenge.

"If there had been any, you would not be here to tell the story," replied Reuben.

"For my part, I doubt whether there is such a thing as a werewolf to be seen anywhere; it is the creation of the superstitious *mujik*," maintained the *Chazan*.

"That is just my idea of it; there are no werewolves," agreed Huldah.

"No werewolf? Did not a *wovkalack* tear up some children in Strelitzev a few weeks ago? The villagers saw the monster jump out of the window, all shaggy, with the head of a wolf," advanced Dinka.

"O, the villagers will tell you a hundred other things which are neither here nor there. My mother has been repeatedly warned not to allow a cat to enter our stable at night, because a cat is supposed to be a sorceress in disguise, who transfers the milk and fecundity of one animal to another. The *mujiks* believe it, but 'there is no witchcraft in Jacob,'" closed the *Chazan* with Balaam's phrase.

"Of course, I have never seen a *wovkalack* myself, but they are so much spoken of that one cannot help believing that there are such beasts somewhere," explained the woman.

"No, Dinka, they are nowhere, I am afraid, or my father would know something about it," remarked Huldah, with her

sweetest smile, her eyes meeting those of Reuben.

"How in the world can a man be turned into a wolf?" Ezra was curious to know.

"They say that a sorcerer does it by frightening a man at night and slipping a wolf's hide over his body. The bewitched *mujik* becomes mad for the woods, crawls on all fours, seeks the forest, joins a she-wolf, and rears a family. Sometimes he enters a village, steals a baby, and raises it with his cubs. Well, you need not smile; I am only repeating what many Jews and Christians believe," added Dinka protestingly.

"But it was your father, Huldah, who introduced the werewolf to us this evening," remarked one of the company. "Let Mr. Pekarow tell us his view of the matter."

Reuben's face became the target of every eye in the room. The man seemed strangely affected by the appeal to enlarge on the topic he had initiated.

"Yes, tell us what you think of the *wovkalack*; you are learned," urged Dinka.

"If there are werewolves?" began Reuben

almost absent-mindedly. "If there are were-wolves! To be sure there are *wowkalacks*, as the rustic calls them, but they are unfortunately not confined to the forests, nor are they the product of witchcraft. There are, indeed, men-wolves; they are neither shaggy, nor are they marked by wolfish heads, nor do they eat or tear up children. No, they are dressed like men; they look, eat, drink, walk, sleep, and talk like men, but are wolves nevertheless, wolves in instinct and ferocity. They do not devour your body, but they tear your soul, wring your heart, poison your blood, darken your sun, kindle and feed a furnace in your bosom, a hell in your mind. They revel in atrocity, rejoice at your agony, live on your marrow, work your destruction to gratify the two basest instincts—greed and vengeance. In this land the name of the man-wolf is legion. He wears the polish of refinement, the mask of religion, the garb of justice, the dignity of office, but preys and spies, and bleeds, and robs, and tears—every inch a wolf. I have felt the pestiferous breath of

one of these men-wolves. His exhalation withered this world's glories for me, crippling my body and agonizing my heart, and only the healing balsam of the immaculate being God in his infinite grace has sent me rendered life endurable, yea, at times enjoyable. If there are men-wolves! Lord, but for those fell, rapacious, blood-thirsty beasts, what a blessed world this were!" Reuben ended his excited speech, all changed by the spectral shadow the topic had conjured up.

The man spoke with the calm solemnity of the tragedian who reviews a tragic situation, and Huldah's interesting and interested face, turned in tender, inexpressible sympathy toward her father, intensified the dramatic moment.

"Excuse me, friends, I forgot myself," said Reuben apologetically, remembering his duty as host. The girl clasped her father's hand in hers. Dinka broke the moment's silence:

"Yes, there are wolfish bad men, too many of them hereabout, and they cannot

be removed either. I wish I could move some of them from this city."

"There is one in sheepskin whom I know, and whom I should like to transport to the land where the pepper grows," said Huldah deliberately, with a look of suppressed hatred. Reuben was startled by the girl's vehemence, aware as he was of the object of her abhorrence. His face looked sallow; Ezra's countenance glowed; the others looked at one another in mute surprise. Huldah, realizing that she had but half uttered her sentiment, continued:

"He is an odious brute, the General, but I am not afraid of him; nor do I see him when he grins, the animal, nor hear him when he whistles to attract my attention. Yesterday, as I stepped out of the door to fasten a shutter, a shower of silver coins fell around me. The cur thought that I would pick them up; but he was mistaken."

"You did not tell me a word about it, daughter," said Reuben nervously.

"Why should I, father? You would only worry, that is all. If he ever comes near

me,—” said the girl, significantly leaving the sentence unfinished.

“Oh, it is General Greboff you have in mind. Not pick up silver coins! I wish he tried it on me. He is not a bad man, is he? Yes, he does think much of you, that I am sure of; but he is not a bad man; he always pays for the butter my Isaac delivers at his quarters. Colonel Sterkatcheff owes me thirteen roubles, and I cannot get a kopeck from him,” was Dinka’s statement of facts.

“And how did you come to be sure that the General thinks so much of my daughter?” inquired Reuben visibly alarmed.

“That is what Colonel Sterkatcheff told me, when I assured him that I was a poor widow, and could not afford to lose thirteen roubles. The dog pinched my cheek and said: ‘You poor? Look into the mirror, and see how your big jewels become you. You are not so handsome as Huldah Pekarow, but you are good for twenty years to come. There are not many like her; the General, who worships her as his goddess, is right. Why, he would walk barefoot to

Jerusalem, and have himself made over to suit her, if she gave him the least encouragement; but the General despairs of success; she is another Sebastopol to be taken by strategy.' That is what the Colonel told me about it."

"That barrel of flesh shall be eaten by the worms before he sees Jerusalem, or Jerusalem sees him. I should stab the beast, if he ever dared insult my sister!" cried Ezra, rising to his feet in excitement, as though his sister had been insulted.

If nobody understood the *Chazan's* indignation, Huldah did, and her appreciation of his sympathy found expression in a look which told a volume of sweet things to the enamored youth. Neither was Reuben blind to the impending *denouement* of the romance. He had watched it in its bud, and he was not unprepared to see it in its blossom. Such was the golden hope he fed on, or his alarm would have been great, indeed.

"Friends, let there be no further talk on this distasteful matter," said Reuben appealingly. "We are not unguarded against

the inroads of brutality, and my child is a budding Deborah, fully armed to encounter vice and defeat it. And does not our living God protect innocence? But this is a poor winding up of a pleasantly spent evening. I am sorry that I brought up the werewolf, and we are going to have something more palatable served to dispel the bad taste unclean things have left in our mouths. Here come refreshments."

Refreshments were served, but the company could not be restored to good humor. The friends of the house had vague misgivings about the girl's safety, yet nobody dared give voice to his apprehension. Ezra and Huldah were invited to sing a duet, but they agreed in declining.

As some of the friends thought that they would have no occasion to meet the *Chazan* again before his departure, they shook his hand regretfully, unwilling to part with so rare a chanter. The clock struck ten when the door closed behind the last of the visitors.

"Child," said Reuben to his daughter, "if

you love me, never pass the threshold of our house unaccompanied, never until God Almighty sends you the one of all men who will be ready to live and die for you!"

III

VIRTUE VERSUS WICKEDNESS

Israel's great Holy-Day month with its suggestive symbols had come to a close. The Feast of Booths, commemorative of his wanderings through the desert, was over. The days were growing shorter, the nights longer, the winds colder, the dew of the morning was changed into hoar-frost, the green meadows withered into a dull yellow. The forest pathways were thickly strewn with the spoils of the disrobed silver-birch, of the oak, the aspen, the alder, the willow, the wild cherry tree, and the infinite variety of wild shrubbery impossible to enumerate. In great flocks the migratory birds were seen to wing their course southward. But in Ezra's heart were the cheer and the warmth

of a mild summer. Autumnal gloom without enhanced the brightness within. After a stay of six weeks in Reuben's house, he had won the great prize. Huldah was his, forever his. It could not have ended otherwise. The youth and the maiden had felt that sacred affinity of soul which mortals call love, failing to recognize therein a collateral of the law of gravitation.

They had been six hard weeks for Reuben, who had anxiously watched his child's intense longing for the youth. In her voice there was a tenderness and plaintiveness which made her father's heart throb with sympathy. He asked his daughter no questions, but he knew enough of her dynamic temperament to dread the consequences of unreciprocated passion. It was an unfounded fear. The talented *Chazan* was as desperately enamored of the girl as she was of him. He watched for an auspicious moment to unbosom himself to his worshipped maiden, and it came about thus:

When the friends, who had spent the evening under Reuben's hospitable roof, had left,

having bidden the *Chazan* a hearty adieu, Reuben excused himself, and withdrew to his office to attend to some correspondence. Huldah opened one of the shutters, and threw herself into an arm-chair, her face turned toward the window. Across the street Greboff's birthday was being celebrated by a display of fireworks. The General was surrounded by the higher officers of his staff and many prominent civilians, and his residence was brilliantly illuminated by lamps and chandeliers, and flowers were spread about in profusion.

Was Huldah interested in the lively proceedings at the mansion opposite? was the question in Ezra's mind. His eye rested fixedly on the perfect outlines of the maiden's form. Why did she not speak a word to him, now that he was on the point of leaving the home he had learned to love so dearly? And why did he hesitate to break the silence? —Was it a sob that had escaped her bosom? —Yes, Huldah was in tears.—Wherefore in tears? Could it be that the girl loved him, and was weeping at the thought of his departure?

Overpowered by an impulse that defied all self-control, he determined to learn his fate then and there. Three steps brought him near enough to lay a gentle hand on her shoulder. The touch electrified the girl. She started, but retained her seat.

"You weep, Huldah," whispered the youth in his softest tones, sending a thrill of rapture through her whole being; "will you not let me have a share in your sorrow?"

The maiden rose, her face turned away, but she allowed her hand, which he had passionately seized, to remain in his.

"Is it because my stay here has drawn to a close, and we are to part forever, Huldah, forever?" tenderly repeated the youth.

Huldah vainly essayed to speak; even her sobs ceased. Blushes and pallor chased each other over her cheeks. Her eyes fell before her wooer's ardent gaze. She made a faint attempt to withdraw her hand from his clasp. Urged into action by the scarcely perceptible movement, he gently drew her towards him, and, coyness at last giving way before resistless passion, the girl silently

and tearfully permitted herself to be embraced by Ezra, who sealed the sacred bond with kiss after kiss.

When Reuben appeared he divined the situation, at once longed for and feared. His daughter's yearnings satisfied, he realized with a sudden pang that love of him would henceforth fill a subordinate place in her heart. But with parental unselfishness, he forced his sense of loss to yield before the thought that his daughter's happiness was secured, so far as human judgment could foresee.

Huldah rushed from the arms of her lover into those of her father, hiding her head on his breast and murmuring caressing words. It was a moment of great joy and deep feeling, intensified for Reuben by the memory of his wife's tragic death, which obtruded itself upon his mind at every solemn moment of his life. Having satisfied his affection by repeatedly kissing his child, Reuben turned to Ezra:

"Come hither, son," said he, tears running down his cheeks, "come hither. With

this daughter of mine you take my heart ; she controls my destiny. I think you worthy of her love, worthy of her immaculate being. May your career be blessed of God and man."

Herewith Reuben laid his hands on the heads of his dear ones, blessing and kissing each in turn. "Sleep will not trouble me this night. Talk to me, daughter. You will not leave your father alone, will you?" asked he in a voice choked by emotion.

The question proved too much for Huldah's filial devotion and tender affection, and the answer came in the shape of renewed weeping followed by a passionate embrace of parent and child.

"Very well, let it be settled thus. There shall hereafter be three, instead of two, in the family," compromised the father with a tearful smile.

Ezra happened to look through the window, and was mortified by the sight of the General across the street. He had evidently been an interested eye-witness of the happy scene in Reuben's house. What

right had he to intrude on the sacred privacy of a family with whom he held no intercourse whatsoever? Ezra and Reuben were indignant, but their rage was impotent. The General held all Jews in contempt, and had a special reason for hating Reuben, who had had the audacity to deal with him in a manner which had struck him with astonishment. He had not been taught to credit an Israelite with a sense of honor.

Greboff was a distinguished soldier, and very popular in Tchernigoff. From the Crimean war he had come forth with his breast glittering with medals and his name emblazoned among the heroes of the day. Greboff was by no means handsome, was very corpulent, but an excellent horseman, had a powerful voice, was affable in manner, accessible to the poor, and liberal to a fault. He had adopted the eccentric habit of throwing handfuls of small coins for the boys and the poor to scramble after, and thus made himself the cynosure of all eyes and the frequent subject of conversation. His motto was "Wine and Women," and elsewhere his

copper-colored nose and prodigious mustache would have rendered him a tempting object for the caricaturist. In Russia, wit of this kind lands a man in Siberia.

One day a package bearing the General's name, and addressed "to the most adorable beauty of the house," was delivered at Reuben's door. The Hebrew turned pale at sight of the address. What could he, a Jew, do to chastise the brazen impudence of a general? Without breathing a syllable of the affair to his child, Reuben returned the parcel unopened, accompanied by a vigorous note, informing the General that he had ample means to dress his daughter in silk and sable, but considered virtuous simplicity far more precious than unholy luxury. Vice was contemptible, however glittering it be.

Thereafter the service of the house was strengthened by a combative matron, who was informed of the danger of her charge. Heavy bars were added to the doors and windows, and a watchman was engaged to have an eye on both houses and to

give the alarm, should the necessity arise. Reuben had concluded to move to other quarters, when Ezra's arrival held out hope of a different solution of the problem. The result of the *Chazan's* sojourn in Reuben's home was providentially to interpose the strongest of barriers a maiden may rely upon for safety. Huldah was betrothed.

Next day Reuben had a lengthy interview with Ezra. He acquainted him with the painful incidents of his life, showed him the life-like picture of Huldah's dead mother, and suggested that he establish himself at Tchernigoff, where, he had no doubt, the Jews would be only too glad to secure his services as *Chazan*. Ezra expressed his readiness to be entirely influenced by Huldah's will. "Whatever may be her pleasure is my delight. The only wish I have is to let my aged parents see the chosen of my soul, and as they cannot come hither, it is proper for us to go to them as soon as feasible," said the youth, to the satisfaction of the fond father.

When the engagement of Ezra and Hul-

dah became known, the Jewish community were quick to express their respects to the incomparable *Chazan* by presenting their congratulations in a becoming manner. Headed by the Rabbi, the elders appeared in a body with a magnificent *Menorah* made of solid silver, offering it to the betrothed couple as a symbol of light, holiness, and felicity. Congratulations and presents came in from every side. Over a fortnight the quiet home of Reuben was held in a flutter. Then the excitement subsided, and the family breathed easy.

It was a melancholy evening. A northern wind caused the shutters to rattle, and a light snow began to whiten the deserted streets. Supper was over. Hannah and Blume had cleared the table, and an atmosphere of contentment pervaded the room wherein Reuben was feasting his eyes on the beautiful lovers. The shutters were closed, and the howling wind without increased the sense of comfort within. The date of the nuptials was discussed and settled. "Son, let your song tell us how God revealed Him-

self to Israel on Sinai," proposed Reuben. Ezra complied, rising like a soldier before his superior, and losing himself in a reverie of improvised melody, which showed him in his superb brilliancy. "You are my singer of singers," cried Huldah in a transport of admiration.

"And you are my angel of angels," returned the noble youth with passion.

"Children," said Reuben, "I did not tell you that I had a very strange dream last night, which, were I superstitious, I should assume implied something untoward to come. In my youth I once heard a stranger in my father's house tell of the weird fate of an informer who, in the guise of a pious Jew, had betrayed his brethren to the government. The place was Mazir on the Dniester. The traitor made it his business to encourage trifling transgressions of the arbitrary police regulations devised against the Jews and then report them to the police. The poor Israelites were at their wit's end to account for their persecutors' knowledge of their most hidden transactions, until a strange occur-

rence discovered their villainous brother to them.

“A tailor who, like hundreds of his kind, spent the week among the peasantry, doing all sorts of work for the villagers, was on his way home Friday afternoon to celebrate the Sabbath with his family. A snow-fall having effaced the pathway leading through a dense wood, the half-frozen man looked around for shelter from the inclemency of the weather. There was none in sight. A feeling of numbness gained on him, and he realized that only a miracle could save him from being frozen to death. He prayed for help, struggling onward, without knowing whither, the snow having fallen a foot deep and left no trace of a road. Evening came, and the thought of his wife and children waiting for him in vain, and wondering what had become of their protector, made him feel sick at heart. At this critical moment a light lured him from a distance. Gathering his last strength, he succeeded in reaching the spot, and found it to be the entrance to a cave illumined by a big fire built of

logs on a brick hearth. Before the blaze sat an imposing figure in a white robe, and next to it, stretched upon the ground, lay a huge dog with tremendous jaws. The figure told the tailor to warm himself, and asked him if he wanted to see the punishment of Yankel the informer. The affirmative answer of the astonished man was followed by the stentorian call: 'Yank-ele, come in!' What was the amazement of the tailor to see Yankel, one of the most honored Talmudists of Mazir, walk in, attired in his Sabbath habiliments. The informer looked as pale as a ghost.

"'Yankele, tell this tailor how often you have played the villain against your brethren, and what your atonement is to be for a hundred years to come,'" ordered the figure in white.

"Yankel gave the details of his infamy with candor that could not be questioned, and concluded with the request to be swallowed by the enormous Cerberus. As though the dog knew all about it, it rose the moment Yankel uttered his own doom. The beast's

eyes glowed like balls of fire, its jaws distended to the dimensions of a crocodile's, and, with a turn of the head that enabled it to close them around Yankel's waist, the monster crunched the informer's bones between his teeth. The sickening sight made the tailor turn away, and the cries of the agonized reprobate reverberated in the cave. Not a vestige remained to show that a whole man had been devoured.

"'Yankele, come in,' commanded the self-same voice. In came the same phantom, repeating the same story, and receiving the same treatment. '*Shema Yisroel!*' cried the poor tailor, his blood running cold through his veins. At these two words the scene dissolved, and the cave vanished. What became of the tailor? When he looked about him he felt the warmth of a comfortable room. He found himself on the rude couch of a *mujik*, his hands and feet frozen. The house was that of an humble forester, whose dogs had drawn his attention to the benumbed tailor by their whining and barking. The man had gone out to hunt

game in the morning, had lighted on the unfortunate Jew, and had restored him to consciousness by rubbing and cold applications.

"The tailor's vision induced the elders of Mazir to look for Yankel, who had been missing since Friday evening. The villain was found dead in his bed, with a cross under his shirt. Yankel had been an apostate and an informer in disguise. The police were notified of his death, and he was buried with honors in the Greek Catholic cemetery.

"That story recurred to me in my dreams last night. Methought I saw the cave, the white figure, and the beast, but, instead of Yankel, it swallowed my deadliest enemy, Yablow."

"Did you not hear a wagon stop before our door?" asked Ezra, starting to his feet.

A rap at the entrance was distinctly heard, and Reuben rose to answer it. On opening the door, he recoiled with horror. There stood the Czar's "black wagon," a conveyance that should bear the inscription which is over the gate of the infernal regions: "Who enters here leaves hope behind."

There was no time for questioning. Two gendarmes laid hold on old Reuben, and the next instant saw him locked in the dismal vehicle. Before Ezra realized the situation, he was likewise seized and pushed into the grim van through another door, the rolling jail having several compartments. As the horses moved off, Huldah gave a shriek of despair. It was her turn now. Four iron hands grasped her maidenly frame, while one assailant smothered her voice with a rag, and two others threw Blume into the next room. All this was the work of a moment, the only witness of the crime being the terrified Blume. The watchman did not appear, and when Hannah, startled by Huldah's cry, rushed to the front of the house, she found Blume in convulsions.

The Czar's subjects speak of the black wagon with as much horror as though it were a vehicle of the nethermost pit. It springs from night, and, having swallowed its prey, vanishes into darkness. It glides into sight like an unearthly hearse. Black horses pull it; black agents direct and sur-

round it. Stern as death, they are inexorable as fate, mute as the sphinx, prompt as hunger and greed, and cold as frost. Without the least warning the black wagon pounces upon its victim, tears him from the arms of love, from the house of prayer, from the bed of sickness, from the wedding table. The black wagon is unwindowed. It disgorges its prey into some sinister cell, there to wither in dire monotony, varied only by interrogations accompanied by the knout. They whom the black wagon seize seldom return alive; the few that escape by a miracle are wrecks in mind and body, the ordeal being too much for man to endure. Whoever catches sight of the black wagon at the ghostly hour—the hour of its activity—rushes out of its way, prompted by terror. Superstition associates with the spectral conveyance the agency of hell, and the worst curse uttered by vindictive ignorance against an object of hatred is: “May the black wagon devour thee.” Twice during this century have the unfortunate Poles learned the significance of that curse.

As soon as the women recovered their presence of mind, their first impulse was to make for the door and inform neighboring friends of the occurrence, but they found the rear and front of the house barred and guarded, and they were warned to stay where they were.

"I shall run up to the second floor, and cry out for help," muttered Blume. "I have a suspicion that the child is in the General's residence."

"Let us cry murder," suggested Hannah. "The dogs can do nothing to us."

In a moment the women were on the upper floor. They tore open a window, but neither of them had the courage to break the silence of the night. The flickering lamps in sight threw a dubious glare on the drifting snow. Not a sound was heard, not a soul seen. In Greboff's quarters a dim light gleamed from behind heavy hangings. Instinctively the women held their eyes fixed on the General's windows, as if the source of all evil was hidden behind them. And lo and behold! two sharp

reports as of pistol shots issued from Greboff's apartments, and were followed by a lurid flame, which brightened into a red sheet of fire, while the air shuddered with the cry of "Murder! Fire!" The women stared amazed. The General's house was bursting into flames. The windows of the burning habitation flew open, and the desperate efforts of the attendants to remove an apparently lifeless body could be distinctly seen from across the street. The alarm summoning the fire brigade warned the city of the conflagration.

"Come, let us try to get out of the house, lest it catch fire, and we burn alive," proposed Blume, leading the way down-stairs. They found the door open, heard the gong of the engines as they came thundering and whizzing by, and were on the point of turning into a back alley, when they heard Huldah's cry for help. It was no dream. Her dress torn to tatters, her hair dishevelled, Huldah broke through a window of the doomed building, ready to throw herself into the street at the risk of life and limb. Heroic

Blume, forgetful of her own danger, interposed her strong arms to break the fall of the raving girl. Hannah was at hand, and no sooner had Huldah landed in the street than she was hurried off to a safe place, night and confusion covering her escape. "Villain, do not touch me!" repeatedly exclaimed the girl, evidently under the feverish impression of imminent danger.

Reassured that she was in friendly hands, she cried: "Let us flee! he is dead, the villain—I killed him—shot him twice—threw a burning lamp at him—it struck a hanging lamp, both exploded—he burned, the beast—let us flee!"

Day dawned on a dismal heap of ashes where the General's residence had stood. His half-charred body, bearing the marks of Huldah's bullets, was laid out in a room of the barracks, and Reuben's deserted home was searched, and put under the seal of the magistrate pending the inquest.

For good reasons, the circumstances of Greboff's death could not be given fully in the local paper. It was insinuated that the

popular hero had been the victim of Jewish vengeance, and the populace was quick in jumping to the conclusion that the Jews had committed arson and murder. Threatening mutterings were heard in the marketplace, where the scum of the city gathered. The rabble had reached that ugly mood in which it takes but a second to pass from word to deed, when a man appeared on the scene, who, owing to his well-known past, was surnamed "the little Haman." To him the crowd turned for information, anticipating a bitter onslaught against the sons of Israel. "Let us hear what Stenko Yablow has to say," passed around, and the man was bodily raised on a dry-goods box, so that he might be seen and heard.

Yablow looked pale, and his eyes betrayed anxiety incompatible with the spirit of a demagogue.

"Speak, speak! Did not the Jews kill the General?" cried a voice.

"The Jews killed Christ, and they slew the good General!" clamored another voice.

"Brothers, if it be proved that General

Greboff has been killed by a Jew or a Jewess, you may count on it that his blood will be avenged; but we must not rashly make innocent people suffer for the crime of one person. You know that all the Jews of Tchernigoff could not be guilty of killing one man," reasoned Yablow, to the great disappointment of the sanguinary crowd.

"If they did not slay the General, they are hiding the murderer," said a priest.

"He is right, he is right; they are hiding the murderer," cried several voices.

"Who can hide himself from the Czar's all-seeing justice? Are not five persons already under arrest? And, as I am a Christian, I shall have a hand in the matter; but innocent people must not be hurt," protested Yablow.

"Innocent people?" echoed the priest sarcastically.

"Will you assume the part of the Czar's all-knowing judge? Shall we have bloodshed?" asked the attorney sharply.

"Did we not have it at your instigation in years gone by, innocent soul?" retorted

the priest contemptuously. "Somebody has pulled the devil by the tail."

For a moment Yablow stood nonplussed, remembering the villain's part that selfsame priest had taken, at his prompting, in the ruin of Reuben's house. The priest and the lawyer looked daggers at each other. There was laughter among the crowd. Yablow struck at his whilom associate in crime with a weapon that rendered resistance hopeless.

"If a frail layman is willing to repent his sins, why should not a father of the merciful Church do as he preaches? We sinned together, Father, let us repent, to prove ourselves worthy of our meek Redeemer," suggested the lawyer, with a twinkle in his eye that threw some doubt on his earnestness.

"He has seen Jew-money," muttered the priest, turning away in disgust from his adversary.

Yablow followed the holy man with a look of scorn, whistled, with his arms akimbo, and wound up by remarking: "Such be some of our holy men!"

His descent from the platform was the signal for the dispersion of the rabble, which could do nothing without a ring-leader.

Yablow's change of heart must be traced to its psychological motive, rare but not unnatural in the domain of human conscience. The man had risen from what he had feared would prove his deathbed, and in reviewing his past he had recoiled from the darkest episode in his career. During feverish nights he had incessantly reverted to the nameless agony he had caused his Jewish rival in the legal profession, and his fervid prayer was that he might be granted a short lease of life for a penitent effort to undo whatever could be undone. Could Reuben's implication in Greboff's death be anything but an answer to his prayer? Here was his chance to atone, in a measure, for a crime weighing heavily on his conscience. It amounted to certainty in his mind that the General had paid with his life for some nefarious misdeed, and he was prepared to sift the matter thoroughly. Thus, having

learned that Reuben and his family were in the clutches of the police, he resolved to throw in all his weight in favor of the prisoners, and he proceeded to carry out his resolutions with great energy. Had he been known as a friend of Israel, his offer to act as the champion of the incriminated family would probably have met with less ready acceptance. The "little Haman" could scarcely be suspected of seeking the charge he coveted from love.

"Will the Jew accept you as his counsel?" was the only question put to Yablow by the procurator.

An affirmative answer secured for him the conduct of the defence before his clients had an inkling of his intention.

Meanwhile the whole Jewish community was in mourning over the mysterious tragedy, because of its serious aspects in regard to the innocent persons implicated, and when it transpired that Yablow was to oppose the prosecution, the prospects of a fair trial darkened. The man was too spiteful to be placated, too rich to be bribed. What

was the use of the liberal money contributions that were forthcoming?

Nobody had the least intimation of the attorney's change of sentiment. Apprehension, however, gave room to hope, when it became known that Yablow had had a lengthy interview with the Rabbi, to whom the Christian appealed for help in winning the confidence of Reuben, who had so good a reason to abhor his very presence. A communication from the pious head of the congregation to Reuben paved the way for a meeting and an understanding between two men whose reconciliation, under ordinary circumstances, would have been as likely as a love-feast between Mordecai and Haman.

The Rabbi was convinced that Yablow's remorse was sincere, and advised the head of the imprisoned victims to trust the Christian's solemn assurances, and to accept his proffered service as defender, he being as powerful for good as for evil.

The fact that Reuben had been the first thrown into the black wagon precluded his

knowing the sequel, which had involved his only child in a criminal case. The Rabbi's information made him realize the magnitude of his misfortune, and, great as must have been his aversion to the author of his life-long misery, Yablow's unsolicited offer to exculpate his child—a service none within a radius of many miles could do better than he—had to be gratefully acknowledged, yea, looked upon in the light of a godsend.

What in any civilized land would have been cleared up by a coroner's inquest, in Russia required an indefinite protraction of legal formalities, pending which the prisoners were to continue in durance vile. Reuben's greatest anxiety was, therefore, to hasten the trial, and Yablow took up the defence with zeal as earnest as his previous animus against the Hebrew had been deadly. A villain touched by remorse, he was the right man to deal with a crime too often connived at by the Czar's subservient magistrates.

When the date of the trial became known, the Rabbi ordered the day to be observed as a fast, and required the Jewish community

to gather in the several places of worship to pray for the exculpation of the innocent victims. In the court-room, military circles were represented by the general of the division in which the dead Greboff had attained distinction, besides a few inferior officers that had sought admission.

Yablow was prepared to accept the evidence of the state prosecutor that Greboff's death had been caused by the discharge of a deadly weapon in Huldah's hand. Nor did he intend to deny that the General's quarters had been set on fire and destroyed by a lamp the maiden had flung at her assailant. But did not the circumstances vindicate the act of an outraged maiden, who valued virtue more than life?

"Facts, humiliating facts, face the court, and innocence cries to heaven for justice," exclaimed Yablow. "General Greboff died guilty, not alone of a heinous crime against inviolable virtue, but he broke the Czar's law, inasmuch as he counterfeited His Majesty's secret means of justice to gratify a villainous passion. The black wagon was

imitated to perpetrate a black crime. To break into a peaceful home at a late hour of the night, seize the head of the house and the betrothed of his daughter, throw them into a black van, then lock them up in a dingy cellar, so that a helpless maiden might be gagged, kidnapped, and ruined! Ye honored judges of the Czar's retributive law, would not you glory in the heroism of your daughters, had they, to escape shame and ruin, done as Huldah Pekarow did? There can be but one decision, and a monument of bronze should be set to the girl in commemoration of virtue's triumph over vice."

Yablow's position was strong, and Huldah's graphic tale of her desperate situation did not weaken it. The fact remained, however, that Ivan Greboff, a distinguished soldier, had fallen by the hand of a Jewish maiden for attempting unsuccessfully what others accomplish with impunity. Thus, while the other prisoners were acquitted as "men without a blemish," Huldah's sentence was reduced to five years' imprisonment, with a recommendation by the

judges to the Czar for a pardon, which meant five years and nothing less.

Reuben and Ezra, seeing Huldah led off in chains, despised their freedom, and Hannah and Blume rent the air with lamentations.

"Do not despair, brother Reuben," cried Yablow, as he joined him outside of the court-room. "Your daughter shall be with you before the moon changes twice."

"That is, if a miracle happens," said the old man in tears.

"Years must pass until a pardon can come from the Czar, if it ever comes," remarked Ezra.

"The miracle will happen, take my word for it," promised Yablow, and looking around, as if afraid to be overheard, he continued: "All we have to secure for our end is her imprisonment in the jail of Kharkow; her escape thence is a certainty."

"My only child, my angelic Huldah in prison!" cried Reuben, his hands folded in pain.

"Here, enter my house, Pekarow," sug-

gested Yablow, as they stood before a spacious building. "I have rooms prepared for you and this young man, until your own home is in order. You need rest and new clothing; everything has been attended to."

Reuben looked at his old enemy with astonishment, hesitated an instant, but remembering that he and the youth needed rest and a change of dress, he yielded to the repeated invitation of the singular Yablow. Distrust had made room for confidence.

"When you have had a bath and have rested, I shall divulge a secret to you, brother Reuben, of no less interest to you than the liberation of your daughter, which, I guarantee, will be effected much sooner than you dream," said the host.

"Speak to me now; why defer a thing that holds out hope?" spoke Reuben.

"Do you hope ever again to behold your son?" asked Yablow calmly.

"My son! Are you sane?" exclaimed the startled Hebrew.

"Pekarow, your son is alive, so may Christ save my soul; he is alive," asserted Yablow.

"Stenko Yablow, why do you torture me? How can my daughter get free, and how can my son, drowned more than twenty years ago, be alive?" asked Reuben, in great agitation.

"Did you ever see your son's body?" was Yablow's question.

"Yablow, you are mistaken about my son; he is dead," maintained Reuben. "Help me out of this land with my Huldah, and you shall have a pound of golden coin."

"Ah, no Shylock bargain with me, Pekarow; keep your gold for your children, man. I have vowed in my soul to be your friend, having done you evil in the past. Now, hear me. After you have rested, the first thing for you to do is to dispose of your property. It will cost me a handsome amount to have your child sent to Kharkow prison. Be at hand there with this young man and another person of courage. I shall look out for the rest; do you understand? The head of that jail is a school friend of mine. Tell this to your daughter as soon as you

may. Assure her of special treatment in the cell and of speedy restoration to those that love her," ended Yablow, insisting that the liberated prisoners attend to their comfort.

Reuben's frame of mind may be more easily imagined than described. After months of suspense spent within a melancholy cell, ignorant of the extent to which his child was implicated in the General's death, he saw her sentenced for a term which to him was eternity. The mere possibility of finding his first-born son, given up as dead, turned painful suspense into anguish. In vain Ezra pointed out the finger of Providence, so manifest in the various incidents of their common misfortune, in the glorious deed of the divine Huldah, as in Yablow's transformation from a fierce villain into a generous champion. Everything would pass off well. "The Christian swore by his Redeemer that your son is alive, and if he is alive, we shall find him," concluded Ezra.

"Son, my wits are turning; it were too much for me to survive," replied Reuben in

a broken voice. "Why does he not tell me where my child bides?"

"Let him do it in his own way. He seems anxious to possess your fullest confidence. The man is in dead earnest and full of devices. Make him feel that you depend on his friendship for all that is dear and near to you in this world," advised Ezra.

"Stenko Yablow, my friend! The woe and the wonder of my life!" cried Reuben.

Meanwhile the tidings spread throughout the Jewish community that the incomparable *Chazan* as well as Reuben and the two women of his household had been set free, but not Huldah, she who had been glorified in prose and poetry as the sweetest maiden, beautiful as the rose of Sharon, sweet as the dew of heaven, heroic as immortal Deborah, but ill-fated as Hannah of old, who, for the sake of faith, sacrificed her seven children. Men and women prayed that she might be restored to her lover, and the girls shed tears of sympathy, and wore mourning, in token of their genuine sorrow.

After the night spent at Yablow's house,

Reuben and Ezra were greeted with great solemnity at the synagogue by the Rabbi and the Elders. In the throng of prominent men who thus welcomed the twain restored to liberty, stood the picturesque figure of as interesting a personality as the *Chazan* himself. It was the youthful Messenger from Jerusalem, Zemach Ben David, a celebrity in the domain of Kabbalistic wisdom and a poet of no mean genius. His verses were composed in the purest Hebrew, and they breathed the sweet soul of Jehuda Halevi. In appearance he bore striking resemblance to Ezra, and his Oriental costume lent him romantic interest.

In Reuben's misfortune he was deeply concerned, and his sympathy with Huldah found expression in a poem so pathetic that its recitation was the signal for lamentation. Zemach shook Reuben's hand with a heartiness which gave comfort, and offered his personal service in any and every shape. "Use me in any way you please; I am born to assist my brethren in distress," said the generous Messenger.

To Ezra Zemach felt especially attracted, having heard of his great vocal powers and the romantic turn his sojourn in Reuben's house had taken. The first meeting of the two distinguished young men resulted in a friendship based on reciprocal esteem.

Zemach and Ezra represented the loftiest ideals of Slavonic Jewry, poetic mysticism and divine song. Furthermore, there was something about Zemach's individuality that impressed Ezra with the feeling that he was the man they needed in that critical hour. The young men loved each other as though they had spent all their lives together as schoolmates or brothers. An unaccountable consciousness of affinity sometimes apprises two beings that they are spiritually related. The strongest feature in their quickly developed affection was the feeling that they should never part again. It was an intuition hard to explain.

Reuben secured access to his daughter to inform her that she would be transferred to Kharkow for the purpose of speedy libera-

tion, and that he and Ezra would be at hand to further her escape. The girl assured her father that her greatest suffering was his sorrow, her heart being gratified by the death of the brute that had threatened her honor and by her fortunate escape from shame, and inspired by the hope of soon joining her dear ones.

"Is not my Ezra an infinite comfort to you? He will wait for me, and be near you till I join you. Promise me to bear it calmly, dear, good father, and my slumbers will be easy, my heart hopeful. If you cry, I shall be miserable; I feel your agony a thousand miles away," spoke Huldah beseechingly, kissing the hands of the old man, who was the image of unutterable grief. Finally they had to part. Reuben had wisely refrained from communicating to the girl the uncertain tidings about a brother she had never heard of.

His next move was to dispose of his home, draw in his various investments, and be ready for migration whithersoever God might direct. In a fortnight everything was

arranged, and Yablow informed him that Kharkow's great prison harbored the heroic maiden.

"We have her where we wished her to be; it remains to carry out the plan of freeing her. You must furnish me with two brave men, and yourself be ready to receive her beyond the Czar's boundaries. I hold myself responsible for the safe issue of the adventure, provided you furnish the right men," the undaunted attorney assured him.

"How much time do you need to carry the plan into effect?" inquired Reuben.

"As much as you need to find the men that are to act as I direct them," said Yablow.

"Suppose I produce the men to-morrow, will it hasten matters?" asked the other.

"The sooner the better; delay will do us no good," affirmed Yablow.

"Whatever money you need I am prepared to supply," remarked Reuben.

"Yablow owes Reuben more than all the treasures on earth can pay. Here, take this guilty hand of a penitent brother, who has often prayed to God to be forgiven. Your

son is alive, Pekarow. You have not asked me any questions, martyred Jew, though I know your heart is burning with fearful anxiety to learn the fate of your first child. Your boy lives; his nurse died, driven to despair by her cowardly act of sending the sleeping babe down the Desna in a boat. Tremble not, man, he is safe. I know all. I have traced him to the home where he spent the years of his early youth, and I shall spare no pains to ferret out his present whereabouts. Now, make your arrangements, and let me know your men. I must have them in Kharkow, where you will meet me before the Epiphany Fair opens. The director of the prison is my chum, and will be lenient to please me. Here is my address at Kharkow; apprise me of your arrival. No money, do you hear? Though it cost ten thousand roubles, Yablow can stand it. Farewell, I must be gone."

There was no time for idle reflection; the hour called for energetic action. That Ezra would rush into fire for his beloved, who could doubt it? But why the magnanimous

Messenger was expected to join him in the perilous enterprise, was a question to be answered; yet it was on him that both Reuben and Ezra counted, and they were not mistaken in their judgment. The Oriental declared his cheerful willingness to share every hazard with Ezra in the attempt to save the imprisoned maiden. The Messenger would not even accept thanks for his readiness to serve.

"Why have I life and limbs, if not to use them in the noblest cause I can think of? A man should appreciate a good chance offered him to do a manly deed," was Zemach's reply.

"You are my messenger from God!" exclaimed Reuben with ardor. "I see that the Almighty is doing wonders for the sake of my precious child."

The next day the three men were on their way to Kharkow, whither Yablow had preceded them.

A matter of serious consideration was the selection of a place of refuge for Reuben and his daughter. Might not an extradition

treaty exist between Russia and her immediate neighbors, and Huldah be applied for as a refugee convicted of murder? Her whereabouts, therefore, not alone ought to be remote from Muscovy, but ought to remain a secret. After the advantages and the disadvantages of a number of places had been considered, Zemach named Morocco as the land of his individual preference, and Tangier as the fairest place for a new home. His reasons were these:

“The city is beautifully spread on the shore of the Mediterranean, the climate is mild and salubrious, the soil fertile, and provisions cheap. Nobody is asked who he is, or whence he comes, it being a cosmopolitan place, and it is an easy matter to put one’s self under the protection of some powerful consulate. Above all, Rabbi Nahon of Tangier is my friend, a very good old man, weighted with sacred lore even more than with years. A letter from my hand would open his heart and his door, and to him I should recommend you. Should you grow tired of Tangier, the

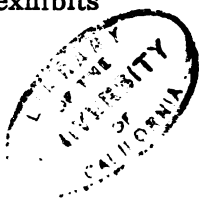
Orient is vast, and Constantinople may be easily reached by the sea."

"Be it Tangier, then, and the Holy Land thereafter," decided Reuben.

The Epiphany Fair of Kharkow is the busiest of its four annual fairs. A fair in Russia means a vast concourse of people from adjoining provinces, a bewildering conglomeration of heterogeneous humanity. Weeks previous to the great conflux of buyer and vender, the vanguard of itinerant commerce arrives, and the preparatory work of booth-building begins. Advantageous spots in the market place command a high price, and are held in lease from season to season. Rows of shops and stalls rise, crudely built of pine boards, lined and covered with canvas, and furnished with shelves for the display of sundry wares calculated to fascinate the *mujik's* unrefined taste. Him you see arrive in festive garments, bringing for sale home-spun yarn, stuffs, woollen and linen; wax, grain, flour, hemp, wool, raw hides, cordage, swine's bristles, fruits, green or dry, strings of dried

mushrooms, sheep, horses, cattle, pigs, in short, anything that will realize a coin.

A Russian fair resembles an Oriental bazaar in all but a few national and local peculiarities. Lines of stands are kept by venders of drinks, such as, mead and kivas, or of eatables, such as, eels, crabs, salted or fresh fish, caviar, and a variety of pastry. The gypsy is here with his fiery ponies, and the money-changer, heaps of silver and copper coin before him, and charging exorbitant discount for metal currency in exchange for the Czar's paper rouble. From different quarters come the sounds of music, vocal or instrumental. Hither the populace streams, eager to hear the fabulous tales of popular heroes told by aged or blind minstrels. Numerous are the taverns, gardens, and cheap restaurants wherein throngs of the lower classes drink, quarrel, swear, and dance. The unfailing drunkard's brawl, the pickpocket's raid, the brutal fight, and the horse-thief's escapade are small incidentals for the ubiquitous police to attend to. There are also exhibits



of finery. Merchants of the higher guilds are there prepared to supply the better class, especially the nobility, with whatever fancy or fashion dictates, from the most costly sable robe to the finest racer bred in the Ukraine.

Yablow justly concluded that the Epiphany Fair was the most suitable time for the execution of his scheme. In his first *rendezvous* with the Hebrews at Kharkow, he declared himself ready, and astonished Reuben by producing a document signed by the Governor, and ordering the head jailer to deliver Huldah Pekarow to the gendarmes who were to transport her to Siberia.

"The Governor has never seen this document," remarked Reuben laconically.

"And my friend, the head jailer, shall never see it," replied Yablow.

"What shall be our part in the enterprise?" inquired Zemach.

"Let me sum it up in a few words. In twenty-seven days the fair opens. By that time you will be equipped and drilled, as the Czar's gendarmes should be, and pre-

pared to present this document at the office of the prison director, or head jailer, who is going to be sick. His assistant will be his substitute, and him you will find willing and prepared. The girl will be delivered to you, and it will be your business to disguise her, divest yourselves of your own disguise, and hurry beyond the reach of the Czar's genuine red-coats. The place of refuge must be your choice, but rest not ere you have crossed Russia's frontier. Austria is not far; embark at Trieste, the Adriatic takes you to the Mediterranean, which laves the shores of all the civilized lands, as well as of others not civilized."

"Young men, you have heard the nature of the task before you, what do you say to it? In no other way can my child be rescued; what is your determination?" asked Reuben.

"This question is for you to answer, friend; there is nothing I am unprepared to do for the beloved of my soul," said the *Chazan* to the Messenger.

"If it be love with you, duty and honor

prompt me to stand by you, come what may. What I promised I shall keep," affirmed Zemach unhesitatingly.

"Young man, I am old enough to be your father," resumed Reuben in a solemn voice; "yet, I assure you, I have never thought man capable of such lofty generosity as your nature reveals. You teach me the great lesson that there is a spark of divine love in the human breast. Whatever be our lot in the days to come, as long as this heart throbs, my soul shall bless you, my house shall be yours. And since you deem Tangier the safest place for me to choose as home, will you, God being gracious to us, add to our happiness by making your home with us there?"

"Why should recompense be offered or accepted for willingness to do what manhood should consider a privilege?" returned the Messenger. "Who compensates you for being a Jew with all it implies? Thus far, I have but substituted one resolution for another. Instead of gathering funds to alleviate misery in the Holy Land, I use a

little time to relieve it as it chances to cross my pathway, the pathway of the wandering Jew, serving God by serving the cause of honor and justice."

"I am struck with astonishment at the unparalleled qualities of your people, Reuben. Here are human beings who, in matters of heroic endurance and moral independence, put the fabled demi-gods to shame. Only a Jew could have been willing to bleed on the cross, so that mankind might be redeemed. I have never seen a Jew despair," asserted Yablow firmly.

"Despair! Dastards despair whenever there is a hitch in the gear," cried Reuben, inflamed by momentary inspiration. "Had the Jew ever despaired, this would be a beastly world, wallowing in the mud of a bottomless slough. Ay, if you, brave though you be, ye followers of the meek Nazarene, had had to foil the obduracy of a Pharaoh, cross a Red Sea with an army close at your heels, receive a Revelation before a burning mountain, and have your loyalty to it tested by forty years of wandering through a desert

infested with hydra-headed Amalek; followed by a deadly struggle of cycles with desperate heathendom, and supplemented by a dance to death extending over eighteen centuries, you would have despaired. But there is enough of Moses in every true-hearted Israelite to guard him against despair in the very jaws of destruction. Ah, witness my daughter. And here, behold this youth, a stranger, willing to hazard life and liberty to rescue an unknown maiden."

"Yes, the Jews are a strange people, and you, my friend, are essentially one of them. I have had my lesson; I am conquered and humbled. She has been to see me, your wife; yes, she has visited me. Death will not efface the sight," said the Christian, the color flying from his face, while Reuben rose to his feet, all amazement and trembling.

"My wife has visited you? What are you raving about? My wife! Are you sane?"

"Your wife, your dead wife, appeared to me in the dead of night, with a thousand snakes hissing Murder! in my ear, and pointing to an abyss terrible to think of,

and I vowed to save my soul by doing good where I had been the cause of evil. Do you understand me now? I have bequeathed to you my whole estate; the Church shall not get a kopeck from me. The fell priest was my evil inspiration. I can do no more; your daughter shall be free, and your son shall be restored to you. Adieu, Reuben Pekarow. These young men will meet me in Kharkow; but who knows where you and I shall meet again—perchance before the Judgment Seat. Take my hand. The old Yablow is dead; I am not he. Take this hand, and say: I forgive, so may Israel's God be gracious to me," the Christian closed his appeal to the crippled Jew.

"Stenko Yablow, a higher Power has pronounced your verdict," cried Reuben, deeply moved; "I bear you no hatred, having had proofs of your great remorse. The evil you have done cannot be undone, alas! Yet you are forgiven by the man whose ruin you confess to have compassed. Yea, you are forgiven, as I believe in the mercy of Israel's long-suffering God. But, before we

part, probably never to meet again on earth, favor me with whatever particulars you have gathered in regard to the whereabouts of my lost child, so that I may trace his footsteps in this labyrinthine world."

"They are written down and shall be in your hands even before the close of this day," were the last words Reuben heard from the man whom he had so much cause to curse and to bless. Making the sign of the cross on his breast, Yablow closed the door behind him. The moment Reuben was alone with his friends, he exclaimed: "That man has been judged by Thee, Lord of eternal retribution. Thy will be done!"—

Two days later Reuben entered upon his long journey to the coast of Morocco, having been furnished with letters to the venerable head of the Jews in Tangier. As his plan was to settle in the Moorish city, he found it advisable to have the faithful Blume accompany him thither, she having had Huldah in charge since her tender infancy.

Yablow remained in Kharkow to superintend the necessary preparations for Huldah's

escape. As neither of the young men knew how to mount a horse, they had to be given an idea of equestrian craft, and a skilful horseman was engaged to instruct them. The details of the impending adventure attended to, the youthful heroes burnt with impatience for the fateful hour. Prudence dictated caution and secrecy, so that, except in their consultations with Yablow, the make-believe gendarmes kept severely aloof from public places, in which an Argus-eyed police might have had opportunity to become interested in their identity. Thus thrown on their limited resources to while away long days and evenings, the youths depended on each other for diversion. Great as was the intimacy of the two friends, there was an aloofness in Zemach's bearing that made Ezra feel uneasy. Was not the magnanimous Messenger going to risk his all to help him free his love? Who had ever heard of such self-sacrifice in return for nothing? Failure in this hazardous enterprise meant Siberia, if nothing worse.

IV

THE MYSTERY SOLVED

The nearer the critical hour approached, the more incomprehensible appeared to Ezra the conduct of his companion in danger. Who was this young man? What were his antecedents? Why did he show so much concern in the fate of a maiden he had never seen? Furthermore, the expressive features of the Messenger, when animated, revived in Ezra's memory the image of someone he must have seen somewhere. "If I have not seen him, I must have seen someone who looks strikingly like him," was Ezra's unspoken conclusion. The fact was that the Messenger left a great many questions unsatisfied, studiously evading every allusion to his past, and this it was that Ezra was anxious to penetrate. Although absorbed by the painful situation of his betrothed, the *Chazan* did not fail to notice that his friend had moments of great mental dejection. Why had he not the courage to ask

him the direct question: "Who are you?" He waited for a favorable opportunity, which came two evenings before the memorable day. In the strain of an ardent lover, Ezra was rhapsodizing on the angelic qualities of his divine Huldah, how his parents would welcome her to their home and their hearts, and how convinced he felt that he had found the one woman on earth to make him happy. A silent tear rolled down the cheek of the Messenger. Seizing his friend by the hand, the *Chazan* cried:

"A Providential power has thrown us together for a purpose yet to be unveiled. We have been friends, intimate friends, these many weeks, yet I know nothing of your history, and, strangely enough, from day to day the conviction has been growing stronger in me that I have seen you before. Certain it is that I bear a dim likeness of you in the picture gallery of my soul. How am I to account for it? And may I not know the sorrow in your heart?"

"You are doubtless deceived by the resemblance I happen to bear to some person

among your past associations. Had we ever met, a Messenger of Zion and a *Chazan* of your renown, it is not likely that we should have forgotten each other," replied Zemach coldly.

"You are right. Yet I could swear to it that I have somewhere seen these very features. Perhaps in one of your nearest kindred?" questioned the *Chazan*.

"My nearest kindred! Friend, he who shall succeed in placing me before my nearest kindred shall be credited with the power of making the sphinx talk," replied Zemach.

"Parents, but no relatives whatsoever?" continued Ezra, with a purpose in mind.

"Neither parents nor relatives—alone in this wide world—alone; ask no more, friend," answered the Messenger gently, adding: "You look surprised. Do you understand my sorrow?"

"Why should I not? Pardon the inquisitiveness of a disinterested friend: why Zemach Ben David? The name implies knowledge of a father," urged the *Chazan*.

“ You touch upon the sorest point in my heart, Ezra; the unsolved mystery of my existence. The authors of my life I have tried to trace in vain. What I dimly remember is that water surrounded me, that a man of coarse features took me out of the boat that bore me, allayed my fears by kind words and caresses, took me into his cabin built on a floating raft, and delivered me to an elderly couple in a house in a large city. The man’s name was David, the woman’s, Dinah. They taught me to love them tenderly, and I have had good reasons to conclude that God could not have given me better parents than those pious people. They at that time lived in Odessa, but we soon crossed a wild sea, and landed in a yet greater city, Constantinople.

“ Well, the hour came, when, before breathing his last, he whom I believed to be my father told me as much as he knew of my origin, handing me a talisman that had hung round my neck when I was delivered to him. His good wife followed him soon, leaving me heir to the little the dear people

had had. I stood alone, friendless, yet not unprepared, my foster parents having given me the benefit of a fair education. What could I do?

"I turned my face toward the Holy Land. Here I craved and received the mission of Messenger. You now know all. Useless to add that my message hides the unuttered purpose of tracing the spot where my cradle stood," confessed Zemach.

"Which purpose has hitherto remained unfulfilled," supplemented Ezra.

"Unfulfilled," confirmed the Messenger. "How find a needle in a hay-stack?"

"You need a clue. Why, if you only knew the stream whereon you were found, that might lead to some result. Have you nothing in your possession to justify systematic search? You said that you have a talisman of some kind. What is it?" asked Ezra.

"What I have suggests nothing; a charm, I suppose, but it gives no clue. O, that the things around us are deaf and mute!" cried the Messenger impatiently.

"Herein we disagree. Whatever there is in the heavens or on earth will speak, if we know how to address it in its language," asserted the *Chazan* philosophically. "What made Solomon the wisest man?"

"In what language would Solomon have addressed a thing like this?" asked the Messenger, as he brought forth an amulet in the shape of a heart.

The charm was made of ivory. On its face was graven an open hand, which displayed in the palm the Tetragrammaton in diminutive Hebrew letters in gold over a conspicuous "R," likewise filled with the precious metal.

"Let me look at it," cried Ezra, grasping the amulet eagerly.

"Mark this 'R.' Why not Reuben?" He talks of a lost child drowned in the Desna long ago! That is why I so eagerly engaged in this adventure, prompted by the hope of possible identification. But Yablow's assertion that he knows about the child is discouraging; he can know nothing about me," maintained the Messenger.

Ezra's hand trembled as he examined the amulet; he instinctively felt that it contained a solution of the problem of Zemach's parentage. He was convinced that the talisman in his hand was hollow, and that its contents were invaluable.

"Have you ever tried to open it?" inquired the *Chazan* in a state of excitement.

"It cannot be opened; it is one piece, made of solid ivory," replied the Messenger.

"I am sure it is hollow, and put together somehow," disputed the *Chazan*. "It should have been opened long ago."

"I would not have it broken for the world," returned the Messenger emphatically.

"Not for the possibility of finding therein a clue to the place of your birth, the authors of your life?" queried the *Chazan* impatiently.

"It is out of the question; the charm is too small to prove anything, but unspeakably dear to me, who am under the impression that my mother's hand hung it around

my neck. It is solid, and cannot be opened," the Messenger reiterated his conviction.

"That may be tested. If your mother suspended the amulet around your neck, she had an object in doing so. Small things play a great part in human affairs, friend. Let us try to open it," proposed Ezra, driving his thumb nail along the edge of the talisman to the great alarm of the Messenger.

"Spare it! It is the only heirloom I have from my unknown parents," cried Zemach.

In his eagerness to take the amulet out of the hand that held it, the Messenger caused it to drop on the hard floor, when, splitting in twain, it brought to light the portraits of a young man and woman, evidently in the prime of married life. No sooner had Ezra's eye fallen on the photographs than he uttered a loud cry, which sent a shiver through the blood of the Messenger.

"These are Huldah's parents, her father and her mother, your father and your mother! My heart, my prophetic heart! You are Reuben's son, Pekarow's lost child, Huldah's brother, my brother!"

All this was said in a breath. Zemach's thoughts quickened with the pulsations of his throbbing heart. The young men rushed into each other's arms, but Zemach broke down under the sudden realization of his father's life-long tragic sorrow. The emotions were too deep to be expressed in words. Sympathy makes grief as well as joy contagious. Ezra made no attempt to comfort his Huldah's newly-found brother, but heartily wept with him, whose mother was killed, whose father was a cripple, and whose sister was in prison. The *Chazan* fondly held the Messenger's hand in his hands, and looking through tears into his eyes said smilingly:

"Not Zemach Ben David hereafter, but Nachom Ben Reuben. Have I not been the Daniel to interpret the hand on the talisman? Your father has with him a large portrait of your blessed mother, of which this is an excellent miniature copy. You resemble your mother, and now I see that it is Huldah of whom you reminded me. It is well that the old man is not here; the

shock might have proved too much for him. It is the finger of God!"

"May the Almighty assist us in liberating the child!" prayed the Messenger in tears.

"There is a prophecy in my soul that we are going to have the sweetest girl with us within a few days. Is not everything pointing that way?" said Ezra.

When the first flow of emotion had made room for sober thought, the young men utilized every moment in perfecting the preparations for Huldah's escape. Yablow was indefatigable in training the mock gendarmes, and was perfectly successful in removing every obstacle in their way. But his success did not appear to relieve him of a sore conscience. The man could neither eat nor sleep, and every day found him more haggard and melancholy than the last. But his activity continued undiminished.

On the eve of the Epiphany Fair, Yablow called at the rooms occupied by the *Chazan* and the Messenger to inform them that matters were in excellent shape. The director of the prison guaranteed the liberation

of Huldah the moment the papers signed by the provincial Governor were presented to his subordinate by the gendarmes. The warning was added that, the escape being effected, the uttermost haste in placing the fugitive beyond the reach of the genuine red-coats was a vital condition of safety, lest the forgery be discovered, in which case he would be powerless to prevent the police from resorting to the usual means of tracking the convict and arresting her and her liberators. Forty-eight hours was the maximum of time given them.

"Then, to-morrow afternoon, when the sun declines, you proceed in military array to the main portal of the prison, and present your order to the proper authority. Gold has paved your way. There will be small ceremony, and the maiden will be delivered to you. Take her and rest not before you touch the other side of the Pruth," Yablow enjoined, sealing the truth of his statement with the sign of the cross. The man looked pale and nervous, as though living in unendurable suspense.

In a few graphic words, Ezra introduced the Messenger of Zion as Reuben Pekarow's lost child, and reported the unmistakable proof they had found of the relationship. Yablow's eyes dilated with astonishment. He crossed himself again and again, seized the hand of the sobbing youth, kissed it with ardor, and swore by the salvation of his soul that he had bequeathed his entire estate to his father, Reuben Pekarow, and that he would take care that the fortune should go to him for whom it was intended. "God and Christ rule this world; man is nothing, no more than a fly. Ah, if all men were good Christians, would not this be a heavenly kingdom? Yet a Jew may likewise be great, and lead a saintly life, as your father has demonstrated, my boy. I stand sobered of a wide-spread lunacy. Yea, it is blasphemous presumption to meddle with Deity in the grand affair of managing His Universe, as though we had an idea of His unfathomable designs. If this world needed no Jews, there would be none. And this, young men, applies to Christianity and

every other ideal cherished by mankind. May I die a Christian as I was born, and may Moses point your pathway to heaven," finished Yablow in a pathetically appealing voice.

The man's remorse was indeed sincere, and his heroic efforts to undo, as much as was in his power, the evil he had conjured up were a triumph of the best quality in human nature over the worst. He shook the young men warmly by the hand, encouraged them by the assurance that he would be near them in the critical hour, exacted a promise to let him hear of their safe arrival in Morocco, and handed the Messenger a heavy purse to defray expenses. "You are under the protection of the Most High, that is manifest," he said in parting.

When the Christian had closed the door behind him, the *Chazan* and the Messenger, as though obeying the command of a superior officer, turned their faces toward the East, and prayed that their perilous attempt might be crowned with success.

The next day found Kharkow a hive

of buzzing humanity. The great Epiphany Fair was open. When the lengthening shadows indicated the approach of night, there issued from a stable in the suburbs two gendarmes finely equipped. Behind them, mounted on a horse, but keeping at a considerable distance, we recognize Stenko Yablow, all fever and anxiety. They advance in the direction of the great prison of Kharkow, wherein hundreds of human lives are entombed in utter silence and unbroken loneliness ; for in the Czar's jails speech and association with fellow-creatures are considered luxuries, and are punished as a breach of discipline. Punishment here means the lash or incarceration in a fetid cell, and no difference is made between men and women.

The gendarmes are stopped and questioned before the prison gate, while Yablow watches developments from a sequestered spot. The gendarmes are admitted. The officer that faces them is not the director himself, but obviously knows what is to be done. He reads the document signed

by the provincial Governor, muses an instant, which seems an eternity to the gendarmes, and, without asking a question, writes an order, hands it to a warden, and turns his face toward a window overlooking a court guarded by a number of armed men. The young men have their eyes on every door within view. Presently one opens, and from behind the bars comes forth a maid in her prison habiliments. It is Huldah, and she is accompanied by a warden to the office, where the two gendarmes are allowed to take her in charge. Looks are exchanged, but no word is spoken, except these by the officer: "Here is your prisoner; take her, and lose no time."

The next moment Huldah is beyond the portals of the prison, in the care of her lover and her brother. At Yablow's whistle a team starts up as suddenly as if it had been hidden in the earth. A dark night and fleet horses favor the escape. Yablow makes the sign of the cross, and vanishes into the darkness of night. The third day dawns on

three happy beings in a region of perfect safety. They have crossed the Pruth. Jassy is their next destination, but they rest not until they find themselves on ship-board on the Adriatic.

Kind reader, be satisfied if no attempt is made to describe what cannot be painted in cold syllables to be articulated by human lips. Great joy, following great sorrow, has but one language—tears. Of these there were enough.

You have seen the meeting of father and daughter on the shore of Tangier; you know the heroes of our story, and we credit your imagination with sufficient power to form a mental picture of the sequel.

THE BAAL-SHEM AND HIS GOLEM.

THE meaning of Baal-Shem is "man of fame." The Baal-Shem must be a *Zaddik*, that is, a man of righteousness and piety. What gives him the power of an autocratic leader, or chief, however, is his great familiarity with things in the domain of the supernatural and his unlimited sway over agencies invisible. Earth and heaven, and whatever there be thereon, therein, and between, are assumed to be subject to his omnipotent will. His unquestioned authority is based on profound knowledge of the most metaphysical of sciences—the Kabala. If the Baal-Shem suffers this wicked world to continue, it is because of his reverence and piety, which do not permit him to thwart the Providential design so manifest to him. Otherwise, one word from his lips would hurl this insignificant creation into the abyss of darkness and oblivion. Infallibility may describe the self-conscious

power of a Pope ; it gives no adequate idea of the Baal-Shem's all-controlling omnipotence. However high the seraph, however low or malignant the demon, the Baal-Shem's behest they have to do, and his votaries know this too well to entertain any doubt about it. What, then, is impossible for so formidable a person?

It was on account of a famous *Zaddik* of this description that Karolin, an obscure town in the province of Moghileff, acquired renown entirely out of proportion to its size and importance. Its geography and topography became of vital interest to myriads of the faithful, who flocked thither to drink in the words of mystic wisdom that incessantly dropped from the inspired lips of Reb Aarele Baal-Shem. The Karolin Chassidim entertained the highest possible opinion of their spiritual chief, and were not unprepared to see the biblical miracles eclipsed by his supernatural doings. It was an open secret that it was in Reb Aarele's power to arrange things above and below to suit himself, hosts of good and evil

agents being compelled to do his bidding, whatever it might be.

As proof of his universal supremacy, it was circulated, during the Crimean War, that the celestial prototype of Czar Nicholas—every ruler below having an archetype above to plead his cause—had been seen in the dead of night, bowing humbly before the couch of the Baal-Shem. The purpose of the nocturnal interview was understood to be an effort on the part of His Shadowy Majesty to secure for his sublunary representative a longer lease of rule, his time having drawn to a close. The Baal-Shem being the spiritual sovereign of this lower world, the matter had been referred to him for final action. Had the cruel Nicholas been a friend of the Jews, Reb Aarele would have inclined the balance in his favor. As the Czar deserved no consideration, he received none. The Baal-Shem would not grant him another day, and His Majesty left the bedroom, crying: "I am lost, all is lost!"

In a few days it was learned that the Czar was dead. The Baal-Shem made little

ado about the matter. He did not like Nicholas, that was all. Concerns of greater moment engaged his attention.

Such trifles as restoring the sick to health, the blind to sight, or publishing the unholy musings of one's heart, or causing a flood of radiance to illumine his own countenance, were but incidental happenings in the career of the man who held the destinies of constellations in his hands.

"The Messiah," the inspired *Zaddik* exclaimed one day, "the Messiah! I can order the true son of David to blow the trumpet of resurrection to-morrow, but are you ready to receive him with the period of horrors to follow the trump of doom? Say that you are prepared, and the dead rise to-morrow."

This positive statement spread consternation among the Chassidim, who shuddered at the prospect of seeing all the graveyards give up their tenants on the universal Day of Judgment. Was it not a wiser course to let a later generation grapple with the dismal incidents foretold in connection with the advent of the Messiah? The Baal-Shem was

accordingly petitioned to postpone his coming, and the prayer was graciously granted.

In his Kabbalistic discourses the Baal-Shem spoke of things in the heavens with a positiveness that proved his thorough knowledge of every star in infinite space. The all-revealing Kabbala was his key to the mysteries of the Universe. His touch consecrated food and drink. The dishes he tasted of were considered holy, and distributed in small portions to the faithful throngs around him. For whatever the Baal-Shem touched had healing virtue. The fact is, that down to this day the Karolin Chassidim are known as a contented, yea, happy, jolly, and humorous sect, doing with scrupulous fidelity whatever their chief does. As he eats, they eat; as he walks, they walk; as he talks and prays, they talk and pray. Praying is the great business of their life, and their orisons are offered up in a voice of thunder, accompanied by violent contortion and shaking of the body; for soul and body must unite in ecstatic worship of the Mysterious Supreme Being.

There are two causes why they pray loud, very loud: one is to bar out extraneous thoughts from the holy of holies, the human heart; the other is to confuse Satan the Beast and Lilith the Harlot, ever on the alert to intercept, with their devilish machinations, prayerful souls soaring heavenward. The ecstasy of the Chassidim reaches its climax when the Unity of the Most Holy One is proclaimed. The recitation of "Our Lord is One" is followed by delirious rapture. The worshipper is overcome by the beatific consciousness that man is the image of God, and is destined to rejoin the Blessed One whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Early bathing is one of the earnest preliminaries of worship. Worldly concerns are held unworthy of more than passing consideration. The sublime task of this life is to prepare for a blessed eternity to be spent among the stars, where kingdoms unfading are reserved for the purified soul. Man being an epitome of the Universe, his soul is as much greater than his body as

the spaces of infinity are vaster than the mass of the earth. The dangers which beset the image of God here below are Satan and Lilith, typifying temptation and worldly pleasure. Satan and Lilith control the realms of darkness, and are ever at work to entice souls from the realms of light. Numberless are the evil spirits under the absolute command of those powers of sin and vice. Salvation is to be found in meditation and prayer and in the effacement of self before the Presence Divine, which fills infinite space with glory. Life is a shadow. The body is nothing, the soul everything; the less there is of earth, the more of heaven. Such is the motto lived up to in all its logical consequences.

From this it may readily be inferred that the faithful of the sect count on much more treasure in the other world than they possess, or care to possess, here below. As a rule, they are both unpractical and poor, but their wives are of the Deborah type in activity and economy. *Thine* and *mine*, moreover, are not known in the social intercourse of the

brotherhood, the idea of property being contrary to their self-sacrificing doctrine. One of them may enter the humble home of a brother, take his seat at the table uninvited, and be served as one of the family, as a matter of course.

The approach of the Sabbath causes every one of the mystics to go through a course of most scrupulous preparations to receive the descending over-soul, which enhances the blessedness of the divinely ordained holy day. The three feasts of the Sabbath are made as royal as means permit. Devotion is intensified; the house of worship rings with the ecstatic roar of a rapturous gathering, the Baal-Shem leading with holy fury, as though the battlements of heaven were endangered by the cohorts of Satan. Each meal is consecrated by hymnal song and discourse on holy things. The rest of the day is spent in a hall, and the Baal-Shem, his eyes closed and his features beaming with ineffable felicity, tells his votaries of things in the heavens above, on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth.

In every face the spiritual delight of the chief is reflected. This Kabbalistic Nirvana often ends with a hymn and an informal dance in praise of God and His countless hosts of cherubim and seraphim, who are eternally circling around the Throne of Glory, the star-outshining *Merchabah* above the seventh heaven. Such is the ideal of the Karolin Chassidim.

Now, in view of the Russian attitude towards idealism and metaphysics in general, and the transcendental Kabbala in particular, it stands to reason that a sect of the calibre of the Karolin Chassidim is not what the average Russian is prepared to admire. Indeed, if the truth must be told, men of weak nerves deem it prudent to keep aloof from the lively brotherhood, a combination of the ancient Essenes and the modern Dervishes. True, no danger for the Czar lurks in the antics of the Karolin Chassidim. No spies need be employed to discover their whereabouts. Their teachings of mundane nihilism, of scorn for things earthly, cannot affect the patriotic fire of the Czar's most devoted

subjects. But how myriads of sane creatures can cultivate so unsubstantial a thing as Kabbala, a thing so much less tangible and enjoyable than *vodka* and caviar, must needs pass the understanding of a Russian magistrate, especially when his nervous system is somewhat unstrung.

Such was, some fifty odd years ago, the case with Payutin, the new magistrate of the town of Karolin. Payutin had never before settling in Karolin seen a Jew, and what he had heard was not calculated to inspire him with admiration for the race. Of course, his conclusion was that all Jews were like the Karolin Chassidim, and he could not sufficiently admire the wisdom of His Majesty, the Czar, who kept the great cities of holy Russia clear of the pestilent fanatics. "The Jews are lunatics, and I am going to teach them a lesson," cried the judicial head of the district, shortly after his arrival to fill his important office.

Payutin was entirely too good a Christian of the orthodox type to love Hebrews at best. To be of the same persuasion with

the Emperor appeared to him the most judicious policy. Their Semitic welcome, extended to him in the shape of a purse—the offering usually made to secure the good-will of a *tchinovnik*—caused him to suppress his aversion for a moment, but only for a moment.

Payutin's antipathy to the Judaic population of Karolin was incorporated in a living being, which the Chassidim, for valid reasons, looked upon with dread as the personification of Satan the Beast. This was Graff, his English bull-dog, a Cerberus in bulk and ferocity. Graff furnished the Baal-Shem with a lofty theme for a profound discourse, in which he set forth the diabolical tricks of Satan and Lilith, who enter brute bodies, like those of serpents and dogs, to do injury to the tabernacle of the heaven-aspiring soul. Graff's appearance in the street was the signal for the Jews of Karolin to take to their heels and seek safety behind closed doors. True, the brute did not bite, but it did the next vicious thing. It threw itself against every Jew or Jewess it

chanced to light upon with a vehemence that hurled the ill-fated victim head over heels into a ditch or a puddle; or it sent two passers-by at once sprawling against a wall, or against a group of persons, who rolled over pell-mell to the merriment of the spiteful magistrate. Redress for fright, injury, soiled clothes, or indignity, was out of the question. Payutin was himself the judge to whom the appeal would have had to be made. To poison the dog would have been the simplest remedy, but Graff gave no Israelite time to offer him a delicacy.

The only outlook for relief from vexation was granted by the magistrate's ill health. It was hoped that the man would either go the way of all flesh, or be converted to the belief that Reb Aarele could do for him what no other physician thus far had succeeded in doing. In other words, it was not thought impossible that Payutin might learn to worship the Baal-Shem. Unfortunately, the magistrate's curiosity tempted him into the sanctuary of the Chassidim at a moment when the whole congregation was roaring in

a delirium of devotion, as it were. Payutin was shocked. The scene of confusion and the noise haunted him thereafter like a nightmare. The magistrate was convinced that the Jews were mad. He felt it his duty, as the Czar's interpreter of the law, to do something, and he began to make up his mind. But who could hide his thoughts from an all-knowing Baal-Shem?

Once more the purse was resorted to. Payutin was gracious enough to accept a liberal gift, but asked in return that the holy vociferations of the enthusiastic followers of the Baal-Shem be reduced by at least seventy-five per cent; otherwise, he assured the delegation, his weak nerves would force him to quit the city. The Chassidim understood the hint, and reported the result of their mission to their chief, who shrugged his shoulders, as if to say: We are going to have it our own way all the same.

The Mayor of Karolin was a Russian of pacific temper and somewhat diluted orthodoxy, diluted by the liquors which Cha-

minsky, the Jewish liquor dealer, one of the Baal-Shem's unswerving followers, cheerfully supplied. Pozanow—such was the name of the official head of Karolin—occupied a commodious residence, wherein the loveliest object was his only child, a maiden of nineteen summers, beautiful, all agreed, and of piety rare even among the most rigid Catholics. If she stood not before the mirror, she was sure to be found kneeling before the sacred icons, praying and confessing her frailties, though everybody that knew her was ready to swear to her immaculate innocence. Among her friends she was spoken of as the “saintly Tilka.” Who would have thought that Tilka was praying for the conversion of the Jews? Yes, like Isabella, the Catholic, Tilka prayed that the Jews might turn Christians, and, as her petition continued unrealized, she hated them with all her heart.

Madam Pozanow had her own good reasons for sharing her daughter's sentiments; but the Mayor, remembering his obligation to Chaminsky, treated the matter lightly.

"The Jews are the property of the Czar. What right have I to convert His Majesty's goods into anything else than they were when he entrusted them to my care?" argued he, and continued passive.

With the arrival of Payutin, however, matters assumed a different aspect. As was to be expected, the magistrate being single and Tilka an enchanting maiden, the relation between the judge and the girl ere long passed into a most interesting phase. Acquaintance ripened into friendship, and friendship culminated in passionate love, to the great delight of the Pozanows and all the friends of the saintly Tilka. The only heart that throbbed against the happy alliance was the omniscient Baal-Shem's. With true prophetic spirit, he recognized another of Satan's and Lilith's tricks, and foresaw evil things to spring from the union.

Tilka's hatred of the Jews seemed to grow with her love for the magistrate. She would actually spit at the sight of a long-bearded descendant of Judah, however ven-

erable his looks. It was not piety alone that drove her to the extreme of aversion. The poor girl reasoned that if the Jews furnished no *vodka*, her father would not be so beastly drunk as he often was. She could not see it in any other light, and her soul yearned for vengeance.

This combination of hostile forces against the mystic denizens of Karolin was greatly strengthened by the moral encouragement of Father Shapirow, no less a personage than the local dignitary of the Church. The learned theologian could not solve the puzzle why there should be such undesirable things as Jews, and failed to understand why a good Christian should miss a chance to play them an evil turn.

Father Shapirow's antagonism to the Jews had a painful motive. It was not wholly religious ardor, but something more tangible; it was his nose, yea, his awfully Jewish proboscis, shining like old Jerusalem in her glory, in the centre of a visage of burnished copper, broad and oily, set in a frame of jet-black hair, which descended to a pointed

beard, reminding one of a fat billy-goat's. Shapirow inherited his cast of countenance from his father, an apostate Jew, who in his time had done his share in maligning the race he had deserted. Shapirow had dark reminiscences to draw upon for bitter contemplation. His parents had lived separated, he having been torn from the breast of his mother, who would not follow her husband's example even after the child had been taken from her, the Russian law giving an apostate power over his children. Shapirow's appearance in the canonicals of the orthodox Church brought home the ludicrous paradox of the Mishna's being employed to sustain the miracles of the Gospels. His solemn march to church on Sundays aroused the humor of the Jewish element. The mortification he endured was too great a tax upon his patience and humility. He awaited his opportunity to be avenged, and it came with the engagement of the pious Tilka to the determined magistrate.

Over a score of years had the cleric

fed the spiritual hunger of the Pozanows. He had poured the baptismal water on Tilka's baby head, had been ever welcome at the hearth of the orthodox family, and had had the gratification of seeing the youngest soul of his charge evolve remarkable affinity with him, at least as regarded hatred of the Jews. But for Chaminsky's power over the Mayor, the priest would have turned his mind, too, against the Chassidim. As matters had stood, he had had to bide his time, but now his chance was come; the magistrate was to be his instrument of vengeance.

Thus, with Tilka's power over Payutin's heart and with Shapirow as the inspiring genius, it is not surprising that a scheme was matured calculated to make the Chassidim feel that it was not good for man to be a Jew and a mystic at that. As to Pozanow's conscience—the Mayor was suspected of cherishing a faint sense of duty—it was appeased by Father Shapirow's spiritual encouragement. He argued eloquently that the descendants of those who had slain the

son of God had no claim whatsoever on the consideration of a good Christian. Moreover, why should the Jews dream of turning Christians, as long as they were treated as though they belonged to the national Church? Was it not a personal affront to the Czar that there should be infidels among his subjects? Whoever rejects the Messiah, must be rejected.

The logic of this argument was strengthened by a barrel of whiskey which, by the order of Payutin, had been lowered into the cellar of his prospective father-in-law. This made the Mayor happy and independent of Chaminsky, the liquor dealer. Having thus fortified himself against all intervention, Payutin caused the Mayor's secretary to issue a strict order to the Chassidim and their chief, that no Hebrew dare hereafter worship in a voice above a whisper, or cause any disturbance, lest the fire-brigade mistake the noise, and bring forth the engines, in which case the Jews would be open to a charge of disorderly conduct, and would be held responsible for the expense the mis-

understanding involved. This meant money for the conspirators and intolerable silence for the worshippers. How could such a state of things continue?

When the Pharaonic edict had been rendered into the sacred tongue, and was handed the Baal-Shem—for no genuine Baal-Shem would lisp a syllable in an unholy language—he fixed his pensive eye on the fatal document, and continued for a full hour as one in a trance, the Chassidim anxiously watching his vacant countenance in the hope of discerning something therein that might indicate a miracle. There was an intuitive feeling that, though his body was here, his soul was in consultation with potent spirits in another world as to the best course to be pursued in the emergency. Suddenly there was animation in his face. He rose to his feet, and passed his hand across his eyes, whispering a few words of Holy Writ, which enjoined the obligation of sacrificing life to principle. This sounded natural enough, the concerns of the soul admittedly being

superior to those of the body. It was evident that the Baal-Shem had concluded to treat the Mayor's manifesto with contempt, and the faithful derived courage and inspiration from the conviction that he had unearthly powers to back him. "There shall be glorious worship of the King of kings hereafter, as hitherto!" exclaimed he in a voice that shook the building. This meant defeat and confusion to the enemy.

The succeeding Sabbath found the Chassidim prepared to bid defiance to Satan the Beast and Lilith the Harlot, who, the Baal-Shem hinted, were animating the bodies of Payutin and Tilka. Rebellion was what the evil-planning magistrate had counted on, and he took measures to meet the exigency, acting, as he was, in place of the Mayor. While the dauntless Chassidim were lost in rapturous vociferation, led on by their sky-storming chief, whose voice rang out like rattling thunder, streams of water came bursting through the windows of the sacred place, shattering the glass and turning the house

into a lagoon of mud and mire. And when the bulk of the congregation made a rush for dry land, the fire-brigade without received them with volumes of the thin fluid and with shouts of laughter, intermingled with jeers and sneers and huzzahs of derision. Neither did Graff fail to contribute his share to the enlivenment of the scene. The water and the ferocious brute endowed the frightened mystics with wings. The Baal-Shem was hurried off to a dry place. Nobody was hurt, but all were badly frightened, and had had their best garments soiled, besides being wet to the skin. Such an outrage cried to heaven for redress. The Baal-Shem looked daggers, breathed vengeance, and his followers knew that he would not allow the indignity to pass unrevengeed.

That afternoon the Baal-Shem revealed no mysteries among the stars to his votaries. His faithful followers rehearsed the experience of the morning, and hung upon his lips to gather from them some hint as to the punishment in store for the adversary. There was some consolation in the con-

sciousness of having suffered for the sake of a dear and holy cause. Was not Israel the martyr of the world? Nevertheless, the Baal-Shem intimated clearly enough that patience had ceased to be a virtue, and went so far as to assure those in attendance that before the new moon appeared in the skies, they should once more and forever be free to pray at the top of their voices.

"The powers of the invisible spheres will assist me in annihilating those vicious instruments of Satan the Beast and Lilith the Harlot. Send me Pulasky, the smith, whom I shall charge to create for me a thing unseen hitherto and unheard of," cried Reb Aarele, glowing like Mars in anger.

Herewith the Baal-Shem withdrew, warning those present that nobody, except Pulasky, dare approach him for twelve days.

The impending doom of the foe having thus been foretold, the Chassidim doubted not that the infliction was going to be dealt by superhuman hands.

With nightfall the Baal-Shem received

Pulasky in his subterranean library. Here piles of manuscript were heaped on shelves, works of hoary ages, among them the "Book of Creation," which God handed to Adam in Paradise, and the "Zohar," the "Light" of the mystic Universe, containing startling revelations for him who can fathom its unexplored depths. In mute submissiveness stood the master mechanic before the wonder-doing Baal-Shem, who addressed him thus:

"Thou, Pulasky, the smith, art the image of the Most High, and I, Reb Aarele Baal-Shem, who hold rank among the omnipotent powers above, do herewith invest thee with the divine skill of the immortal Bezalel, whose wonderful workmanship adorned the Holy of Holies. Hear me, and do as thou art bidden. I must have a terrific power of destruction, a *Golem*, and I charge thee to call it into existence. Masters invisible are placed at thy command. The hour must be the dead of night; the conditions, utter silence and solitude. And these shall be thy preparations: Bathe thyself seven times in running water with Orion

and the Zodiac shining upon thee. Confess thy sins as on the Day of Atonement. Then read these seventy-seven names of powers which I herewith hand thee. Read them in a whisper; read them with awe. Strange shapes will emerge from the invisible vast to do as thou wilt command. They will vanish at the crowing of the cock, but the thing will be done. Fear them not; they have no power over thee; thou hast power over them. Make them forge for me a horror of black iron. It shall be as awe-inspiring as Death, as terrible as the Plague, gigantic as the Anak who followed Noah's Ark through the waters of the deluge, implacable as Satan the Beast and Lilith the Harlot. Hissing serpents shall be its hair; its eyes shall glow like the fire of hell; from its mouth shall shoot forth a live dragon as tongue; its claws shall be like those of the tiger, and its tail a venomous hydra. The *Golem's* hands shall reach to the soles of its feet. Dress it in a garb of feathers as black as Abaddon. It shall stride forth with wings outspread, shall breathe fire and

vomit flame; a hellish roar shall issue from its throat; and I shall cause it to move and act as a power possessed of reason and will."

On realizing the nature of his task and the agents to be employed in its execution, Pulasky felt a chill run through his blood; but the order was given in so peremptory a tone that willing compliance seemed the only response possible. Being one of the faithful, Pulasky had no doubt as to the issue. But to speak of spirits is one thing, to face them is another. However, the smith braced his nerves, cast a glance at the scrap of paper handed him, and said unquailingly: "It shall be done." The Baal-Shem waved his hand in token of dismissal, and the interview was at an end.

Pulasky proceeded to carry out the order to the letter, confident that nothing untoward would betide him, provided the conditions were carefully complied with. In a brook beyond the limits of the town the smith bathed himself as he had been told. By the time he reached his house, the hour was ripe for the carrying out of the order.

He entered his smithy, barred the door behind him, took a long breath, struck a match, and, by the gleam of a flickering taper which he had lighted, he fixed his eyes on the seventy-seven Kabbalistic names of what he felt sure must be angels. Another chill ran over his shuddering frame at the thought that unsealing his lips meant conjuring up superhuman agencies to execute ghastly work. But Pulasky was a man of stout heart and unbounded faith. Slowly, deliberately, and reverently he began to whisper one name after the other, and, lo and behold! The space around him widened into a hall of several hundred paces, the roof rising in proportion. There was a growing noise as of rustling wings. Flitting flames passed through the air and circulated around his head. When the last name was read, there stood before him seventy-seven genii, with hands folded and heads inclined.

"Command, master, we are bound to obey," was the unanimous utterance of the willing crew.

Pulasky sketched the *Golem* they were re-

quired to fashion. No sooner had the order been given than seventy-seven forges burst forth from the ground. There was a blowing of bellows, a glowing of iron, a mighty forging and welding of metal, and a skilful fashioning of limb after limb. The black prodigy assumed fearful shape, a demoniac power terrible to behold. Without fear Pulasky watched the activity of the phantom mechanics. Suddenly the shrill cry of the cock transformed the whole scene into one of dim narrowness and dead silence. The smithy shrank to its former dimensions. Everything vanished, except the inanimate *Golem*, seen in all its hideousness by the flicker of the taper. The smith took a good look at the infernal creation as it sat huddled in a corner, its prodigious arms folded. Then he closed the smithy, and retired to rest. The next day he reported to the Baal-Shem: "It is done."

Meantime the Chassidim lived in exultant anticipation of beholding a miracle as great as any ever vouchsafed unto the mortal race. What else could have been

meant by the thing "unseen hitherto and unheard of," which Pulasky was to create? Every eye was riveted on the smith. Fame is one of the airy nothings which the humble Vulcan did not seek. He kept aloof from the inquisitive crowd, would not be interviewed, and looked mysterious, all of which conspired to concentrate the roused curiosity of an intensely interested public on his humble person. Many questions remained unanswered. Why did the Baal-Shem retire from public intercourse with his votaries for twelve days? And why twelve? If it had been seven, the number is sacred. Why twelve?

A faint light dawned on the mystics when it became known that on the twelfth day from the memorable Sabbath the wedding of Tilka to the magistrate was to be solemnized. This information reached them in the form of another order, issued under the seal of the Mayor, forbidding them to appear on the street on the day on which the saintly maiden was to be married—an order promulgated to please the bride.

At the same time Chaminsky was instructed to furnish a considerable quantity of wines for the banquet to follow the nuptials. He accepted the commission, provided he was paid for his liquors in advance. Being assured that the amount would be handed him on the delivery of the goods, he appeared with the order filled, presented the bill, and received payment in full at the hands of four policemen, who took him to the Mayor's stable, and gave him a sound flogging, for the magistrate had decided that Chaminsky's conduct was an insult to the official head of Karolin.

Such was the climax of the outrage committed on the Chassidim in the person of the liquor dealer. This happened two days before the wedding of the Mayor's daughter.

That the mystics were in a fever of excitement at the sight of poor Chaminsky, and that the Baal-Shem thought himself justified in starting his *Golem* to do terrific execution, need not be said. There was enough pent-up energy in the sect to burst the barrel of a cannon. The trouble was that Satan

the Beast and Lilith the Harlot had assumed forms in which they could not be annihilated by uproarious prayer.

Let it not be supposed for a moment that Payutin succeeded in checking the burning ardor of the Baal-Shem and his followers to the extent of making them pray in a subdued voice. This was absolutely impossible, because the fiendish legions of the dark Prince, left unconfused by the Baal-Shem's opposition, would have upset the spiritual Universe. To prevent so fearful a catastrophe, those that had cellars unloaded their pious souls underground in as energetic a manner as was compatible with safety; the others sought their opportunity in the neighboring woods, making the glens ring with sacred invocations. Terror seized the beasts and the fowl of the forest. Even the Russian wolf—and the wolf is a good Russian in more than one sense—turned tail and fled, astonished at the chaos of yells, so unlike the huzzahs of the ordinary hunter. Terror seized the unsophisticated *mujiks*, whose ears caught the pious bellow-

ings of the faithful, none daring to penetrate the sylvan mystery. In the eyes of the Chassidim these painful circumstances were invested with a halo of historic glory. They reminded them of the stirring Asmonean age, when, hunted by the mercenaries of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews turned every cave into a sanctuary.

A beautiful morning initiated Tilka's wedding day, as though the heavens smiled on the union of the magistrate with the most orthodox beauty of Karolin. Early in the forenoon the bustle of many servants about the Mayor's residence, the floral decorations, and the hoisted flags, indicated the nature of the approaching event. Flowers and foliage adorned the portals of the church. On the main street the sympathetic joy of many of the towns-men was manifested by fine exhibitions of the florist's art in their windows. As the day advanced, and the arrangements for the ceremony were perfected, an air of solemn festivity appeared to hover over all the town, except the unadorned homes of the

mystics, who, had they not been afraid, would have displayed symbols of mourning. The solemn chiming of the bells, Father Shapirow's majestic march to the church, and a line of carriages headed by one drawn by two beautifully caparisoned white horses, all pointed to the same event: the saintly Tilka and the formidable Payutin were on the point of becoming husband and wife.

The ceremony is over. It is nightfall; it is night. The non-Jewish population fills every available spot around the Mayor's residence. Carriage after carriage draws up before the festive mansion, unloading belated guests, largely of the small nobility from neighboring estates. A military guard of honor surrounds the precincts of the brightly illuminated building. Eating, drinking, and dancing within; drinking, brawling, and rough horse-play without. In the Jewish quarter darkness and not a sign of life. Such is the situation when the clock strikes eleven. Are they around the synagogue all asleep? O, no! The Baal-Shem issues from his library, a volume of

mystic lore in his hand. He is joined by Pulasky, who shows his chief into the smithy. They stay therein a few minutes, return quickly, pass like phantoms, and disappear in their respective houses, as though nothing appalling had occurred.

Useless to say that the *Golem* had been despatched on its bloody way. Its mission was that of the destructive power that visited every first-born in ancient Egypt. Unspeakable was the horror that seized the people at the sight of the fiendish apparition. Those that moved an arm to make the sign of the cross felt their blood congeal in their veins. A pack of howling dogs signaled the approach of the dreadful demon. The next instant Graff shot like a bomb from the Mayor's window clear over the heads of the stupefied throng, yelped wildly, rose on his hind legs, snuffed the air, and showed symptoms of hydrophobia. He was answered by a score of his kind, whose unearthly howls turned the street into pandemonium. The frightened brutes tried to hide themselves behind the mass of

terrified men and women. The Gorgon emerged from a by-way, strode forth leisurely, its pennons flapping like black sails against its gruesome bulk, and turned into the highway leading to its destination. It moved on slowly, its fiery eyes rolling, its dragon tongue wagging, the snakes on its head hissing, the hydra-tail waving to and fro, and its hellish throat bellowing forth such a confusion of noise as would have appalled a herd of walruses. As if turned into stone, the military guard moved no arm to intercept the approaching demon. It would have been a vain attempt. Gates and bolts yielded like burned straw before the presence of a horror personifying a hell of hideous things. Its dark volume swallowed light, and the Egyptian darkness gave it grim prominence. Toward the Mayor's residence the *Golem* advanced, rending the air with infernal notes; therein it disappeared. A minute's dreadful silence was broken by a tremendous explosion, like the eruption of a volcano. Showers of flying debris filled

the neighborhood, hurting hundreds of people, who fell prostrate to save their lives. The convulsion was followed by an outburst of fire and the total annihilation of the festive dwelling and all therein. As if to complete the desolation, a thunder-storm broke over the city, giving the ruins an air of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Not a Jewish house was damaged ; not a Jewish body hurt. The Baal-Shem spent the night in his subterranean library. The following Sabbath Reb Aarele and his followers were early in their place of worship to give vent to their joy over the signal defeat of Satan the Beast and Lilith the Harlot. The Baal-Shem smiled when he was told, that the official version of the *Golem's* work proclaimed, that "the accident was caused by a red bolt of lightning, which killed the people and destroyed the building."

FRIENDS IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

DAVID and Jonathan were cousins, the first-born children of two sisters, and they loved each other tenderly. It was a curious coincidence that physically as well as psychologically the boys held out promise of conforming in a remarkable degree to the two heroic types represented by their biblical namesakes. Red-cheeked, strong-boned, short-limbed, quick-witted, impenetrable, daring, and cunning, David had acquired renown among the youths of his native place as an adversary to be shunned. In each of his frequent encounters with unfriendly schoolmates—and he was fond of provoking quarrels—he displayed new tactics, ever retaining the field, though always outnumbered by his enemies. The lad gloried in mischief. There was not an orchard in Choinick, a small town in the province of Minsk, in which he was not familiar with every fruit-bearing tree.

If David planned a raid, success was a foregone conclusion. Everybody knew that he had been there, but it was hard to catch him, and well nigh impossible to prove him the plunderer. Many a time he abstracted from some neighbor's oven the *Kugel*, that is, a most savory pudding which forms part of the historic *Shalet*—a combination of many dishes stored in one capacious reservoir and sealed up for the Sabbath dinner—and substituted therefor a vessel filled with potato parings, or something less odorous. There was a little anger and much laughter, and the matter was ended, until another *Kugel* disappeared. Serio-comical roguishness distinguished the clandestine expeditions of the lad, calling forth merriment as often as a new depredation was added to his account. His reputation for courage can be judged from the suspicion that he was the author of the mischief done in the sanctum of Yente the Knowing.

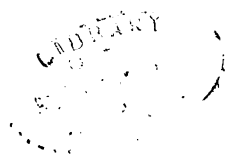
Yente was a woman of uncounted years and of unfathomed knowledge in the occult

lore of the healing science. She cured the incurable. Malicious gossip associated her with the Evil One, an assumption somewhat sustained by her chronically red eye-balls and her demonstrated power to counteract effectively the baneful afflictions caused by the evil eye. The withering shafts of the evil eye are dreaded by Jews and non-Jews, wherever the sane influence of the school-master is not felt, and Guttenberg's necromancy has not been invoked to tear the mental cloud woven of ignorance and superstition. It has been found that flourishing youth and sweet infancy are especially liable to be stricken by the evil eye, which is followed by a sickness characterized by nervous prostration and intermittent fever. Yente restored the victim by whispering over some article of his wear, and relief was instantaneous. She also asserted that she knew the latent virtues of many herbs and blossoms, which she gathered in due season, and labeled her "mystic teas." Of these she dispensed freely to the poor, but she charged handsomely when they were

in demand among the wealthier of her patrons. In every case the result was wonderful.

Yente's forte, however, was midwifery, a specialty which opened the doors of non-Jewish houses to her, and gave her influence among the local officials. As to her power of curing the endless ills and woes of infants, that was simply unsurpassed. In the province in which she lived, she could well afford to laugh all competition to scorn. In short, Yente was the recognized authority in domestic remedies among the Jews and Christians of Choinick, and she bore herself with the lofty dignity of self-conscious importance natural to one holding so exalted a position.

That Yente was a privileged character among the living was, however, less remarkable than her apparent familiarity with the dead, of whom she did not entertain the least fear. For not alone did she attend to the bathing and dressing of the women who died, but rumors were rife that she had often been seen at midnight in the grave-



yard and in the *Shule*. The *Shule* is the place of worship, where the dead are supposed to assemble in the ghostly hour to pray and to read the Sacred Law. When approached in reference to her nocturnal roamings, Yente shook her head dubiously, which was tantamount to an affirmative answer. The woman understood how to hide her thoughts, and thus gave her dealings an air of mystery.

David, whose dare-devil audacity made all things possible, was credited with an offense against her which was never forgotten, and which she never forgave. Yente's habitation was a cabin built of logs. The furniture comprised a bed, a tub for water, a bench, and a table. A hearth of pale bricks supplied the means for heating and cooking, while a crude box nailed to the wall held the necessary eatables. Her sole companion was an enormous Maltese cat with a head more lupine than feline, and of an age running far beyond the local chronicles. She scared off every living creature, and woe befell the cur that came

within reach of her paws. Only at night was the cat seen to roam around the neighborhood, her eyes glowing like those of a preying wolf, and unruly children were subdued by the threat that Yente's cat would seize them at night.

In Yente's immediate neighborhood was the public bath, an institution of importance in Slavonic Jewry. Here the women refresh themselves on Thursdays and the men on Fridays, the steaming and the plunge in the reservoirs being hugely enjoyed. Selig, an old blind man, was the only occupant of the bath during the week, and he assured the public that the building was haunted. He told the children blood-curdling tales of what he nightly heard around him, the sounds—cries of infants, weird music, dancing, brawling, and feasting—always ceasing at the crow of the cock. He was once offered a glass of wine by one of the airy revelers, but he read the *Shema'*, and the attention was never repeated.

Yente was known to have a tender feeling for Selig. Kalmon, the eagle-eyed *Shadchan*

of Choinick, suggested an alliance between the pair, but nothing came of it. Selig was willing enough, but Yente hesitated, leaving the matter in suspense. Friendly intercourse was cultivated between the blind bachelor and the knowing maid, but wedlock remained the possibility of an unknown future.

The question people often asked one another was: What is Yente going to do with her treasure? It must not be thought that they referred to Selig as her treasure. The woman had a real hoard. This was an established fact; for with the income of a professional man she combined the parsimony of a miser, so that her unemployed wealth was assumed to have reached a fabulous figure. She had no relatives, no soul to claim a thing after her demise. Who will inherit her fortune? The next question was: Where and how does she manage to hide it?

One moonless evening, unearthly lamentations, making night hideous, issued from Yente's cabin. It sounded as though a

wolf and a cat were vying with each other in the endeavor to rend the air with appalling notes. It was Yente and her cat. The feline creature appeared to share the distress of her mistress, and joined her in her dirge of despair. Selig responded at once; others followed hesitatingly, the region being shunned after nightfall. Yente raved distractedly, the cat whined, and walked about her in a circle, her tailed raised, her eyes burning, and her wolfish head moving ominously.

"He has robbed me, he has robbed me—he has taken all, the thief has taken all; I shall never see my many, many silver roubles again," cried the crone despondingly.

Yes, her treasure was gone, pot and all. She had hoarded it under her hearth, over which the cat kept faithful watch, except when she roamed about at night. How anyone could get at the treasure without attracting notice was the puzzle of the moment.

"He has robbed me, he has robbed me," repeated Yente in a mournful strain, folding

her shriveled hands in despair, and moaning, as if her dearest lay hushed in death.

"Whom do you accuse of the theft?" was Selig's pertinent query.

"She means David," was the simultaneous murmur of several persons present.

No sooner was the suspicion uttered than Jonathan, who happened to be there, challenged the accusing parties to show cause why his cousin should be charged with the crime.

"How dare you accuse an honorable man?" cried Jonathan, clinching his fist.

"Yes, he is the thief," cried the exasperated woman defiantly; "it is he, it is he."

Jonathan's eyes flashed wildly as he turned upon the crone, and he emphasized his words by shaking his two powerful fists at her: "If thou wert not a woman and a witch, I should teach thee a lesson."

Jonathan had no doubt of his cousin's innocence.

"And I say, it is he, nobody but him," asserted Selig belligerently, raising his stick in defiance, and adding: "The thief stole the

Kugel out of the *Shalet* a hundred times."

"And I say, you are a pair of black slanderers, possessed by the demon of lies," retorted Jonathan, and withdrew with vengeful ire, sure that there was not a shadow of truth in the unanimous accusation of his friend. Jonathan's generous nature, sustained by a strong sense of honor and candor, revolted against the idea that his cousin should descend to the crime of stealing, or withhold anything from him that he was entitled to know.

It should be stated that Jonathan, though backing David in every legitimate enterprise, could not be prevailed upon to participate in expeditions unsanctioned by his sense of right. He drew a line between plundering a *Shalet* or an orchard and stealing the earnings of labor. David humored him in this singular interpretation of the eighth commandment, availed himself of his cousin's assistance as far as it could be secured, and did the rest of his jobs on his own account. Whether he was guilty of the robbery in question remains to be seen.

The two cousins loved each other devotedly, but, saving fearlessness, had little in common. Jonathan was frank, stately in stature, scrupulous in matters of principle as he understood it, and generous even to those he had reason to dislike. He was popular among his comrades, and David was feared. Seen together, the cousins were a striking reproduction of the Scriptural picture of the son of Jesse pacing the street of Gibeah by the side of princely Jonathan.

Yente's loss was the talk of the town. A small sum of money was collected and offered her, but she refused to accept it. She also declined to administer her nostrums to those in want of them, knowing that to find a substitute for her was impossible. The woman meditated vengeance. Hereafter Selig was her constant companion during the day; the nights he spent in the bath. Kalmon lost all interest in the pair, now that the match had no golden promise for him. It had been otherwise when Yente was rich, but no shrewd *Shadchan* bothers himself about the poor.

David had little to say in reference to the robbery. When informed that the crone charged him with the crime, and swore to wreak vengeance on him, he made the strange remark that the spirit of the son of Jesse scorned the Witch of Endor; neither did he fear the impotent threats of an old sorceress; he would, moreover, know how to deal with him who dared associate his name with the theft. Herewith the matter ended. The only serious result of the painful occurrence was Yente's determination not to pursue her profession. The evil eye made havoc in the town. Selig's interposition was sought in vain. "She shall do as she pleases," was his laconic answer. It was then thought that Kalmon's oratory might have good effect. It failed, partly because he was not interested in what appertained to Yente, since she no longer was mistress of a hoard. His mind was busy with another scheme. Kalmon had a numerous family and a quick eye to business. Nothing of interest to him escaped his attention.

David's defiant answer to Yente's charge

and his pregnant allusion to the spirit of the son of Jesse, as well as his attachment to Jonathan, made it appear plausible to the wisest elders of the town that the two youths represented something more than appeared on the surface of things. The Kabbalists, of whom there was a goodly number in Choinick, and with whom the transmigration of the soul is an article of faith, were struck by the amazing phenomenon of a late re-birth of two ancient heroes, evidently for some Providential design, to be revealed hereafter. Seen in this light, the character of David was a psychological necessity. And who could doubt that Jonathan was a worthy representative of his old prototype? Did not his figure and nature bear striking resemblance to his immortal namesake's?

What this conclusion meant to Kabbalistic dreamers, only he who entertains profound reverence for persons renowned in Holy Writ can imagine. Henceforth people were eager to learn of new mischief done by David, or of some heroic act done by Jonathan. Further reflection en-

gendered the idea that the reappearance of the two chivalrous princes of hoary antiquity in youthful forms might indicate the imminent arrival of the Messiah. The son of Jesse being here, why should not the son of David follow? Are not the times out of joint? Is not Israel suffering under the iron heel of Edom? Surely it was time that Elijah blew his trumpet.

As soon as Kalmon, the *Shadchan*, grasped the drift of the plausible assumption, it dawned on his mind that his opportunity had come to do a great thing. The prospect of bringing about an alliance full of promise to the parties concerned as well as to himself, an alliance likely to culminate in the birth of Messiah, dazzled his imagination. Match-making having been his life-long vocation, Kalmon seldom failed to hit the nail on the head. A survey of circumstances convinced him that success was sure to crown his efforts, and he took up the affair with alacrity.

There is a vast deal of shrewd diplomacy in the strategic moves of the proficient *Shadchan*. In the first place every marriage-

able youth and maiden within the debatable periphery of what he pleases to call his district is carefully registered. Genealogy, personal charms, as well as defects, age, and probable dowry, are noted for reference. If there be a black sheep in the family, a stain on the character of a member thereof, the *Shadchan* is bound to know it. He is in truth the most trustworthy chronicler of his district, his records being a mirror, as it were, of the moral, not less than of the material conditions, prevalent within his domain.

The *Shadchan* understands how to make capital of occasional meetings with parents who have marriageable children. Prepared to embrace the opportunity, the professional man enlarges on some general topic of interest, until he deems the moment auspicious for the beginning of the operations proper. His eloquence fairly overflows in extravagant praise of the family in view; what an honor it were to get one's son a wife of that incomparable stock, from which lights have sprung that made their age radiant with the effulgence of their spirit. If there be a

bodily or mental shortcoming in the young person under consideration, it is cleverly contrasted with a score of magnified virtues. The advantages of the party present are belittled in order to heighten the distinction of the party suggested as worthy of his alliance. "It is true that the girl is not exactly handsome, and is somewhat squint-eyed, but you should see her cook, and bake, and attend to the little ones during her mother's sickness. Then, was not Rabbi Joel, who fasted every Monday and Thursday, and knew the whole Mishna by heart, her great-grandfather? What a family she will raise!" The most consummate *cicerone* would have found the artful *Shadchan* more than a match for his voluble tongue.

A person of some note in Choinick was Samson the Driver. The man had a history. Samson was the father of two motherless maidens, Miriam and Leah, and the owner of a considerable fortune, two-thirds of which he was prepared to give away with his winsome daughters, provided the right husbands were suggested. That Kalmon

had the girls on his register need scarcely be said. But Samson had formed extravagant conceptions of the youths he would deign to accept as his sons-in-law, and his ideal could not be found among the youths of Choinick. "The young men who are to marry my daughters must be lights in Israel," maintained Samson, and Kalmon was at his wit's end how to find those "lights" in his district.

Samson did not make much of his reputation as the strongest man in the place, so strong, it was asserted, that he could uproot a tree, not unlike his namesake, who tore out the gates of Gaza. The Driver had not known how strong he was until he saw his cow in danger. This occurred on a Sabbath morning, while the Jews of Choinick were gathered in one of their synagogues to sing psalms. At this time a plague was decimating the cattle in the non-Jewish quarter, while in the Jewish herds, grazed on separate pastures, not a goat died. To satisfy a malicious proclivity, the *starostvo* directed the herdsmen to unite the herds of the Jews with those of the other citizens, on a day when the

Jews were not likely to offer serious resistance, the avowed object being to communicate the plague to their cattle. He was mistaken. As soon as the Jews heard of the infamy, they hurried to the spot to extricate their cattle. They met with force, the *starostvo* having been prepared for the encounter. The Jews were beaten back, and the battle would have been lost, had not Samson arrived in time to turn the tide of victory in favor of his outraged brethren and their cows. Armed with a knotty cudgel, he threw himself into the thick of the combat with a vigor which caused the enemy to look for shelter behind fences and hedges, leaving the field to the redoubtable Maccabeus. The herds were separated, and Samson's heroism was on every lip, but he bore his fame with becoming modesty.

The man was kind-hearted, pious, and charitable, but abysmally ignorant. His ignorance would have been less striking, had he not had the irrepressible habit of misquoting sacred lore, to the great amusement of the learned, who ungenerously entangled

the whole-souled man in theological discussions entirely beyond the reach of his knowledge. To strengthen his position he would unload a volley of Hebrew phrases, ludicrously incorrect and frequently disproving what he was anxious to establish. Good-natured as he was, he would join in the laughter elicited by his illiteracy, instead of feeling humiliated. "As a Rabbi I should be a failure, I suppose," he would say innocently.

Samson had risen to wealth by a curious accident, not to say adventure. Originally a poor driver of a one-horse team, he had taken passengers from Choinick to the neighboring towns. But one day he began to deal in hides and grain, paying in hard cash and disposing of his goods to advantage. Where had he gotten the money?

The secret was this. One Friday morning, on returning from his weekly trip, he was accosted by an emaciated soldier, who looked an object of pity. The wretched warrior assured him that he had spent the preceding night on the porch of the open market-place,

that he was sick, hungry, and chilled to the marrow of his bones. He did not possess a kopeck to buy a cup of tea, would not accept charity, but offered a shabby coat for sale, as he had two, and could dispense with one. That he had but one leg, and needed less covering than a man with two legs, was the pathetic justification of the proposed commercial transaction. Samson had a big heart. He gave the man a few kopecks, told him to come to his house to get a warm meal, and refused to take the garment. The soldier thanked him, threw the habit on his wagon, and went his way, leaving Samson to feel sorry that he could do no more for the unfortunate man.

There are few cities, towns, and villages in Russia where such wrecks of humanity may not be found vegetating, their strength and manhood beaten out of them during military slavery, which consumes the best half of their lives. If he has no relatives to take care of him, the Russian veteran has either to be a menial, or beg, or die in a poorhouse. Besides, there is a popular preju-

dice against old soldiers, who are met everywhere with ill-disguised suspicion; the reason is that the Czar's humbler veterans often incur flogging for the commission of petty larcenies.

Once under his roof, Samson greeted his aged mother, kissed his daughters, unhitched his horse, offered up his prayers, took a frugal breakfast, and was on the point of retiring to take a nap, when his foot came in contact with the coat he had thrown on the floor. He thought that he had struck something unusually heavy in one of its sleeves. He tried the other sleeve, and found it equally loaded. What might be therein? Perchance a soiled handkerchief, tobacco leaves, old newspapers, or other nondescript articles which a Russian soldier is in the habit of stowing away behind the upturned cuff of his greatcoat. Whatever it might be, Samson's curiosity was aroused.

A closer examination of the sleeves showed them to be carefully sewed up. A rip with a knife gave the driver access to the inside

of one of them. Pushing his hand inward as far as he could, he got hold of and brought forth a large package in an envelope. Still sure that it contained nothing of value, he opened it, and, to his speechless amazement, found it literally stuffed with a variety of bank-notes, running from five to a hundred roubles. The man trembled as he ripped open the other sleeve, wherefrom he pulled forth another envelope, containing about an equal amount in paper currency. The precious garb was now anxiously searched, and the quest was rewarded by the discovery of a flattened package cunningly hidden under the broad upper lapel of the coat; its contents almost doubled the treasure in Samson's hands. Joy, not unmixed with apprehension, seized the driver's heart. He counted thousand after thousand, not one note of recent date. The poor soldier had carried that coat about for years, without dreaming of the fortune hidden therein for the humble Israelite. Finds of this kind have often enriched dealers in old clothes in Russia, especially after a war, it

being habitual with the *mujik* to hide his pelf in a pot and bury it, and with the soldier to sew it up in a sleeve for future use, often prevented by the death of the owner.

Samson was inclined to believe that the beggarly soldier was none else than Elijah, the Prophet, who can assume any guise when on an errand of assistance to the worthy. For tradition speaks of Elijah as the benign messenger dispatched now and then to relieve the woes of poverty and misery.

In this way Samson the Driver became the richest man in his town, and he made good use of his wealth.

Shortly after this happy occurrence Samson had a confidential interview with Rabbi Joseph, who advised him to have a new *Torah* written for the congregation, in grateful acknowledgment of the blessing received. Accordingly, one of the most skillful and pious scribes was engaged, the best parchment was prepared, and the sacred work was begun with great solemnity. The scribe bathed every morning, worked in si-

lent seclusion, and when the work was completed, the scroll was carried to the Holy Ark with magnificent ceremony after a feast of rejoicing. Samson looked and felt as if earth and heaven delighted in his action, and was sure that the best chair in Paradise had been reserved for him.

How the impecunious driver could do so grand a thing, this had to remain a secret, lest the police hear of his find, in which case his fate would have been sealed. He would have been arrested, imprisoned, and his property confiscated.

Fortunately this had happened long before Yente's hoard disappeared, or the good man would have been suspected of the robbery, although his sincere piety precluded the least suspicion that there was anything wrong in the acquisition of his riches.

Hereafter Samson's ambition centred in the wish to see his daughters married to youths of learning and noble lineage. He watched every budding genius in the place, but the finest specimens of the Talmudic stripling about him did not seem

worthy of the prizes he held out. Of David and Jonathan he had had no thought, until the quick-witted Kalmon unveiled to him the Messianic hopes founded on the identity of the youths with the royal singer and the sweetest prince in ancient Israel. The *Shadchan* drew a transcendental picture of the golden likelihoods destined to spring from an alliance of Miriam and Leah on the one hand, with David and Jonathan on the other. Growing eloquent, Kalmon went into a prophetic transport over the brilliant vista the proposed union would open for Israel in exile. Samson's poor head turned dizzy with the intoxication of inexpressible joy. A shower of biblical misquotations descended on the head of the devoted *Shadchan*. Samson's erudition filled Kalmon with astonishment. He professed surprise at the appropriate lore thus freely given.

"From what Delilah did you learn your wisdom, brother Samson?" inquired the foxy match-maker. Kalmon was not aware that he had touched a tender spot in the heart of the driver.

"Ah, my Delilah—you mean my Esther—has been dead now over seven years, alas!" sighed Samson pathetically. "But if the blessed Messiah is to be our grandchild, she will certainly hear of it, and rejoice in the other world, will she not, Kalmon?"

The *Shadchan* had no doubts on this matter, and he left the honest ignoramus, sure of success so far as the latter was concerned

The parents of David and Jonathan lived under the same roof and in such cordial relations with each other as to be looked upon as one family. Kalmon's dignified appearance and his diplomatic statement of the case had the weight of an irrefutable argument. Samson, it was true, was a fearfully illiterate man, but then who can buy a cow for literature? The Talmud is a very great and holy thing, but who can feed his wife with Talmudic saws? The driver was an honest, exceedingly religious man; Miriam and Leah were fine girls, and the dowry they were going to receive was the main item to be considered. The *Shadchan* had the logic

of stern reality on his side, and gained an easy victory. In his presence David and Jonathan were consulted as to their inclinations, and their answers were characteristic.

"If Leah will have me, I take her to be the sweetest of the two," said David.

"I should prefer Miriam at any time," observed Jonathan.

"It suits me either way, boys," closed Kalmon, delighted with the result of his effort.

Hereupon the parents kissed their sons, the mothers shed tears, several earthen pots were broken in token of the engagement and of the discomfiture of the Evil One, who, in company with Lilith, plans the frustration of every happy union, and felicitations were exchanged. The following day the document of the betrothal, setting forth the conditions and fixing the date of the nuptials, was duly signed, and, according to the custom in vogue, presents were given to the betrothed couples. David and Jonathan each received a golden watch and a fine set of the Talmud; the maidens got precious

rings and silk shawls, and the happy event was celebrated by a great dinner at the house of Samson, followed by a similar repast spread at the home of the prospective grooms.

At the approach of the seven festive days devoted to Jewish nuptials, the Jews of Choinick were up and doing, preparing for the auspicious feast. Everyone was gratified except two persons, Yente and Selig, who had no blessing for the coming wedding. The cordial invitation Samson extended to them they rejected with scorn. Selig shook his fist at the beadle who had come to inform him that he was to preside over the table set apart for the poor on such occasions. This was meant as a compliment, but was received as an affront. Yente's displeasure, muttered in curses, gave Samson much concern. He tried hard to conciliate the woman by a liberal offering, but met with a rebuff. "You should bear in mind," Samson pleaded, after some Scriptural misquotations, "that yours is an imaginary wrong. Is it right to wish evil

to a youth destined to be the father of the true Messiah?"

Yente's response to Samson's plea was a fit of hysteric laughter and the slamming of her door in his face, for it was before her shanty that he had succeeded in facing her. The man stood with his mouth wide open, by no means unalarmed at the evil prognosticated by her behavior. He had a high opinion of the woman's magic secrets, and felt sure that she was bent on mischief. A consultation with the spiritual adviser of the congregation, however, relieved the driver of his darker apprehensions, and he proceeded to make royal preparations for the wedding of his daughters.

"There shall be no stale bread at our banquet," announced Samson, a metaphorical way of promising that the guests would be treated in proper fashion, and he was known to be as good as his word.

Orthodox Israel expects the bride and the groom to spend their wedding day in prayer and meditation. To those on the point of embarking on the high seas of life

it is, in a sense, a Day of Atonement, and as such it is treated. David and Jonathan accordingly spent the whole day in seclusion. With the decline of the sun their best men appeared to prepare them for the marriage ceremony, which was to take place in the presence of the entire congregation, gathered between the twin places of worship, a square large enough to hold several thousand people.

It is proper to mention that Choinick, like other towns of the kind, sustains two places of worship; one is the *Beth Hamidrash*, a house devoted to daily prayer and the study of the Law and its commentaries, and a *Shule*, an imposing building open only on Sabbaths and only during the warm season. During the week and during the winter, the *Shule*, built in pyramidal shape, looks like a haunted castle; it is unheated, unilluminated, shrouded in sepulchral gloom, and believed to be the haunt of the dead at midnight for the purpose of ghostly devotion, a cycle of awful stories being current to substantiate the belief.

Between the sacred edifices, under a canopy known as the *Chuppa*, at the setting of the sun, the Rabbi was to tie the knot that was never to be untied. Yellow sand was strewn to brighten up the space, and things in general wore an air of festivity. When the cousins were ready to be escorted to their brides, Jonathan had tears in his eyes. "What oppresses thy heart, my Jonathan?" asked David.

The taller youth looked down at his friend in pregnant silence, his face betraying suppressed emotion. The young men embraced each other with affection. "Speak thy heart, my Jonathan," insisted David, "for I see that thou hast something to say that weighs heavily on thy breast; is it in my power to serve thee?"

"Yes, I have a request which thou must grant, David. A mysterious impulse impels me to ask of thee a thing never before asked of man. Yet I shall ask no more than I am willing to give in return," replied Jonathan, with great earnestness.

With a look of genuine surprise David

rashly swore that, whatever the request, he was prepared to gratify it. "I know that my cousin will not ask me to do wrong, and what you are determined to do for me, I shall most assuredly do for thee."

At this Jonathan resumed with grave deliberation: "Cousin, I find this life to be a great, deep mystery, surpassed only by the yet deeper mystery enshrouding man's fate beyond the grave. The heavens with the stars above us, what do they signify? What is the purpose of this creation? Who and what is man? What becomes of him hereafter? Seasons change, years fly, generations perish, the skies are mute—who are we? Wherefore are we? What becomes of us? This I long to know. Therefore, O David, be it settled between us that, whosoever of us two dies first, shall in due time report, if possible, to him left behind, on things hitherto unrevealed. Swear by the living soul in thee, as I herewith do, to hold the promise as sacred as the three-fold covenant that forever weds Israel to his God."

There was a moment's silence in the room, broken by the oath of David, who swore to do what he might be permitted in the matter of satisfying his friend.

"Do you not hear the sound of the drum and the lute summoning you to meet your brides under the *Chuppa*?" asked one of the best men. "Let death and mystery alone," and the tardy bridegrooms were hurried to the scene of solemn joy.

In a community in which mischievous Cupid has to make room for the calculating *Shadchan*, no sonnets are sung to the eyebrow of the mistress. Yet it has been found impossible to divest matrimony, however prosaically contracted, of the air of romance that will ever hover over the associations of love. The Slavonic Jew and his co-religionist in Oriental regions behold in the early consummation of marriage the realization of an ethical ideal. At the age of eighteen the Talmudist would have the youth pass through the matrimonial market, wedded life being the fundamental design of creation, a view the *Shadchan* knows how to

utilize. And in a town where life's monotony is rarely interrupted, where cows, dogs, pigs, chickens, goats, and unwashed children are promiscuously scattered in the lanes, a wedding cannot fail to create a stir in the dull atmosphere. In this case the interest was heightened by the rare incident that two sisters were to be joined to two cousins, of late the most talked-of and observed in the place. Furthermore, there were not many in the congregation whom Samson the Driver had not invited to the regal feast to follow the consecration of love. No wonder that the open space between the twin houses of worship, where the canopy was stretched on four gilded poles, teemed with humanity robed in festive garments and eager to catch a glimpse of the two brides, as they were brought along under silken veils, preceded by a band of music. The brides were stationed under the canopy, attended by their parents, and thither the bridegrooms were led to the sound of the band. The young men looked pale, walked with eyes downcast, and wore

an air as solemn as though they were led to a place of execution. Who could tell what wedded life had in store for them?

When the ceremony began, everything appeared to go wrong. The first hitch occurred when the Rabbi mistook one bride for the other, barely escaping the fearful error of wedding Jonathan to the girl of David's choice. Next, confusion was caused by Jonathan's failure to crush the wine-glass thrown at his feet. The thing would not crack, as though made of steel. This was an ominous augury, the successful breaking of the tumbler being a sure indication of good luck. To add to the alarm of those most concerned in the sacred rite and in the future of the two couples, a pack of whining cats in a yard near-by rent the air with hideous noise. The significance of the feline chorus impressed itself on the mind of the superstitious crowd, when it was perceived that Yente's lupine cat was at the head of the fell disturbance. It all meant something portentous for the parties under the *Chuppa*. The Rabbi's presence of mind

alone saved the ceremony from ending in utter perturbation. A repeated effort enabled Jonathan to shiver the tumbler into fragments. The cats were scared off the ground. The seven benedictions closed the solemnization, and the united couples were made to link their arms. The band struck up a march, the multitude clapped their hands, and the guests proceeded to the festal hall, where the feast continued until late at night, followed by dancing till dawn.

On the following Sabbath the brides were ushered into the women's gallery of the synagogue as responsible daughters in Israel, and Samson began to figure out the date on which the Messiah was likely to be born under his roof.

An air of mystery hovered over Choinick. Yente gave up her vocation, and lived on what little Selig supplied by his weekly rounds at the doors of the neighboring houses. Liberal offers of help by Samson were scornfully rejected. A strange sympathy and a purpose to be divulged hereafter linked the old creatures together. They withered vis-

ibly, held secret counsel, returned no answer beyond the shrugging of shoulders to every question, and startled the people by purchasing a roll of material generally used for the vestments of the dead. Soon a rumor spread that Yente was engaged in preparing the last garments for Selig and herself, and a little spying into the window of her melancholy habitation proved the rumor to be well founded.

That Selig was under the crone's magic spell, nobody had a doubt. As for the rest, the fact that many pious persons think it meritorious to have their last vestments in readiness explained Yente's desire to prepare for death. Was she not old enough to prepare for the grave? The only detail in the proceeding that puzzled the curious was the especial interest she showed in Selig's post-mortem attire. What was the astonishment of the people when it became known that Yente and Selig had applied to the Rabbi to be made husband and wife! When it is taken into consideration that Yente was a shrivelled hag, bent almost

double, whose beginning the oldest heads of the town failed to remember, and that Selig was fully her age, blind, and a pauper, the comical aspect of the alliance is readily comprehended. The people laughed and wondered, but Samson's head rested uneasy. The good man felt that there was a snake in the grass, prepared as he was to see the powers of darkness conspire against the coming of the Messiah. But interference was out of the question. Nobody had power over Yente's mind. The woman had never before been reasoned out of a whim, and had of late met friendly overtures with sullen mien.

Yente insisted on being wedded between the synagogues, under the canopy used for the last double wedding. Samson objected, but it was beyond his power to prevent the ceremony from taking place according to usage. As a bride, Yente could not be refused what other brides were granted as a matter of course. The day was set, but it was not marked by any preparation whatsoever. As the hour of the nuptials approached, curiosity

brought together a number of men and women, among them David and Jonathan, who indulged in all sorts of ludicrous speculations. Who would give the bride away? Who would be Selig's best man? How would Selig find the finger of his bride to put the ring on it? Joke followed joke, until Rabbi Joseph arrived, and took his stand under the *Chuppa*, ready to perform his function. No sound of music was heard. The day was drawing to an end; the swallows swarmed in the air; the herd was returning from the pasture; the crowd around the *Chuppa* grew larger. Where is the pair to be united in wedlock? Suddenly the silence of death fell upon the space of which the *Chuppa* formed the centre. Ghastly faces, eyes staring in consternation, were turned toward the lane leading to the public bath. Thence two shapes, a man and a woman, robed in the long, white, flowing vestments of death, came forth slowly, tottering, arm in arm, with the solemnity befitting a walk to the grave. They were Yente and Selig, who had concluded to be united thus for a purpose known

to them alone. The sight of death stalking in grotesque attire chilled the hearts of the spectators. The beadle had a bench at hand. Linen hoods overhung the faces of the couple, who approached the minister to be joined as husband and wife. It was a ghostly scene fit to be enacted in a graveyard at midnight. The Rabbi proceeded with the ceremony. Selig placed the ring on the bony finger of his bride. When the echo of the last "Amen" had died away in the ambient air, the married couple simultaneously sat down on the bench, Yente throwing her palsied arm around the man whom she appeared to have charmed into passive submission. The blind man did not betray a sign of animation. Was he enchanted or dead? Strange were the feelings of the throng, whom an unaccountable spell seemed to chain to the ground.

The sun was below the horizon; twilight asserted its rule; beast and bird sought their resting places. Nothing stirred in the air; not a syllable fell from a lip. The Rabbi had

his eyes fixed on the two figures before him on the bench, leaning against each other, their faces hidden by the white hoods. Almost imperceptibly their heads inclined forward, sinking slowly, until their chins touched their breasts. "They are dead," whispered the beadle. The Rabbi's countenance turned pale; the people dispersed without uttering a word. Who had ever heard of such a marriage and such a sequel? Before the bodies were removed for burial, the lupine cat made her appearance, purring and walking around the body of her dead mistress.

The superstitious awe with which Yente had been looked upon while among the living, swelled into fear of her now that she was dead. Her departure from life had been in accord with her whole career. Further gossip matured the idea that blind Selig had likewise been a necromancer, the haunted bath having been a fit residence for him. Only a few of the most pious elders attended the funeral of the bridal pair. The dogs howled the night after the nuptials as

well as the following night, and a strong wind sprang up, blowing and whining, as though animate and inanimate creation were joining in a dirge over the demise of the witch and her associate. The people shuddered under their blankets. Had they had any doubt about the witchery of the departed couple, the uproar in nature would have removed it; for it was remembered that, after the death of the great sorcerer Wovkalack, a cyclonic storm had unroofed every house in town, such being the manner in which the evil spirits welcome a doomed soul.

The impression that the wedding ceremony of Yente and Selig had left on the eyewitnesses may be easily imagined. But nobody's memory was more haunted by the ghostly scene than David's and Jonathan's. In the company of their sweet consorts, under the roof and at the hospitable board of their generous father-in-law, the young husbands succeeded in whiling away their days, frequently amused by the irrepressible misquotations of the illiterate Samson, who

persisted in mutilating sacred lore. The darkness of night, however, put them into a different frame of mind. The hoot of an owl, the rustling of the leaves of a tree, the flutter of a bat, the rattling of a loose shutter, were enough to upset the equanimity of the young men, however courageous they endeavored to seem, and when the hour came to retire for the night, deep gloom darkened their faces, which did not add to the happiness of the youthful wives.

It must not be supposed that Miriam and Leah were denied their share of marital affection. The cousins vied with each other in demonstrations of connubial love, and the restlessness of their husbands was the only bitter drop in the young women's cup of bliss.

"As soon as the light is out in our room, the phantom of the ghastly marriage scene soars before my eyes, whether open or closed," confessed Jonathan to David.

Without admitting that he was similarly haunted, David called him foolish for being afraid of a dead pauper and a buried witch.

"I wonder what has become of the hag's infernal cat," said Samson one dark evening, unaware of the palpitation his remark caused the hearts of his sons-in-law.

"She ought to have been buried with her mistress," thought David.

"I wish she were buried," cried Jonathan, apparently very much concerned.

"If I get hold of the beast, I shall send it where the Azazel goat went," said Samson, sure that his Scriptural allusion was in place.

Such was the mood of the cousins when the three melancholy weeks threw their historic shadow over all the gatherings of dispersed Israel. This yearly period of religious mourning over the fall of Zion, beginning on the seventeenth of Tammuz with a fast, ends on the ninth of Ab in a like manner. The three weeks usually occur in August. During that space all joy is banished, and the only idea kept vividly before the Jewish mind is the remembrance of the national calamity, too great ever to be forgotten. The gloom increases with the

approach of the month of Ab, and culminates on the ninth day of the month. It is the anniversary of the fall of Israel's Holy City and Sanctuary, first brought about by Nebuchadnezzar's general, Nebuzaradan, and, at a later date, by Titus Vespasianus. The same day is also remembered as the one on which their Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella, out of deference to the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada, expelled the Jews from Spain.

The day is spent in fasting, and the Jeremiad, or Book of Lamentations, is recited in the synagogue. Whoever has witnessed the celebration, as observed in orthodox Israel, will never forget it. Immediately after sunset the votaries of the Mosaic dispensation and of the traditional law founded thereon assemble in their houses of worship. The shoes are taken off, and, seated on low benches, the mourners of Zion stir the air with their plaintive chanting. The mourning is so pathetic and sincere that one unfamiliar with the ancient event might believe that the calamity had occurred

yesterday. Every year the faithful expect some miracle to happen. Did not God promise to restore divine glory to His favored city? The most devout prove their sincerity by a characteristic act of self-abnegation. They sleep in the street on straw. It is believed that if one keeps awake all night, he will be vouchsafed such revelations as only the prophets were deigned worthy of.

Samson was neither last nor least in the public demonstrations of sorrow, which are regarded as manifestations of Jewish loyalty. He slept in the open air, and was joined by his sons-in-law. David was determined not to close an eye that night.

"Will not the ninth of Ab be turned into a day of joy after the birth of Messiah?" inquired Samson significantly, sure that a year later there would be a new life in his house destined to initiate the Kingdom of God here below.

"That is what our sages say," replied Jonathan, opening a bunch of straw.

Within the enclosure of Samson's spacious

yard the three men spread their bed of straw on the bare earth, and made themselves comfortable for the night. Full of golden dreams, sound in digestion, and undisturbed in conscience, Samson, having said a prayer and tucked his blanket around him, was soon in the land of Morpheus, followed thither by Jonathan. David alone struggled against sleep, straining his eyes to discern the miracle that he anticipated among the stars.

Was it a dream? Or was it reality? The moon turned yellow, darkened, and vanished. One after the other the constellations of a cloudless heaven faded, until the firmament became a total blank, deep, dark, and silent, like a graveyard on a moonless night. Then came a myriad howls shivering through the air, accompanied by a Babel of hideous noises, shrill, hoarse, fearful, mingled with demoniac laughter and appalling groans, as though the whole earth were an insane asylum, and all the inmates were raving in utter darkness. Following the unearthly uproar came a convulsion in nature, as if the elements were transgressing their

bounds, culminating in a dreadful earthquake. Cataracts of fire burst forth from unfathomed deeps, laid bare by the universal upheaval. From one of the yawning abysses rose a black bird of enormous wings, whose baneful shadow, like the blast of the simoom, withered far and wide whatever it fell upon, transforming beautiful regions into an endless, desolate waste, covered with the relics of a decayed world. In the wake of the winged hobgoblin uprose another still more hideous, drawing after him countless millions of lesser horrors, which cried: "Samaël, Samaël, thou potent prince of the nether world, we are here to do thy behest. Let us know thy will!"

There was enough light to reveal the fearful deeps between two mountains, whence a host of winged goblins flocked upward, covering every available space to the topmost crests of the towering peaks, as migratory birds alight on a tree, and make it appear a spire of raven plumage. Between the heights the infernal prince, dimly visible, rose from the chasm he filled,

his lower limbs reaching down to a glowing pit. Soaring on his prodigious wings, he thus began in a voice that rang like distant thunder:

“Ye zealous adversaries of light and what that beam engenders of happiness and joy, denied us in the tempestuous gulfs where everlasting Night, our silent mother, grins at gloomy fires, which her sable garb illumine! Conceived in darkness, for a purpose dark, we but our inborn impulse follow in promoting evil among the brood of man. He, so much less than we, enjoys such blessings as we crave in vain. Imperfect he, yet preferred, and stationed in a glorious world he scarcely knows how to value, much less to rule, though claiming sovereign sway over kingdoms beautiful as heaven. Doomed unguilty, as we are, who may of justice think? Unblamable we, therefore, for doings forced on us by Him on high for ends we fail to comprehend. Proceed we then henceforth as hitherto to foster evil in the human heart, turning earth into a vale of crime, like Sodom and Gomorrah,

till brother murders brother, less remorseful than the beast that its own cub devours. Why scruple as to means? Employ fanaticism, vanity, conceit, jealousy, and greed, but never cease to work until the mind's high faculty is dimmed, until man loses faith in Providence, and seeks a substitute among the idols of our make. Though first we be uneasy thus to warp intelligence, thus to untune the music of the soul feeding on the harmony of creation, let us persist until sin invades it, and when chaos and confusion rule therein, our will shall prevail. Mankind is mad, and shall be maddened till every fool proclaims himself his god, self-worship being worse than base idolatry. With no Supreme God to look to in despair, man will espouse despondency, concluding that life is pain, death the end of life, that love is lust, religion a mummary, death a horror, immortality a fable, and he a monkey, born to labor with the brute, live in sorrow, and perish like the worm.

"Such be our task, lest, by ever-growing light irradiated within, man ascend too high

for us to overthrow his rule. Already does he of the Lord's anointed dream. Who knows, unless our legions triumph, what may happen to defeat our end!"

As if in response to this Miltonic strain from the mouth of his Satanic Majesty, a terrific thunderbolt convulsed the atmosphere, and earth shuddered like a brute shaking off uncleanness. In a moment the steep acclivity was a mass of writhing skeletons, wriggling in agony and crying: "Woe, woe, woe!—No God—Death ends life—Love is lust—Religion a mummary—Immortality a fable—Death a horror. Woe, woe, woe!—Man a monkey!"

Myriad mocking tones echoed the heart-rending lamentation, fiendish laughter mingling with the blowing of demoniac horns and yells of hellish voices. Night put on her raven black, and the infernal bird returned with a warning scream, before which the black cohorts fled and vanished like vapor before a cyclone. A shock from beneath was followed by a crack, as though the firmament were bursting asunder. A

flood of dazzling light broke on the dismal scene, and dissolved it into naught. Nature stood robed in majestic loveliness, like a bride waiting for her lover's embrace. The heavens shone with growing splendor, while from the deep azure flowed a symphony so enravishing that animate and inanimate creation seemed to respond to the heavenly strain. Soon the interstellar spaces teemed with shining hosts of angels, each waving a flaming sword. They descended, as if in pursuit of a hostile army, led by a cherub, who uttered these words :

“Ye guardian ministers, be watchful, lest the evil ones prevail in dark design, as hitherto they have by much retarded creation's blessed consummation here, where by self-imposed sacrifice man must rise to holiness and truth, until earth is counted one of heaven's unpolluted spheres, a seat of song and worship. Let not in him the brute the godlike quality suppress, nor dread of death wake in him despair. His breath, a part of God, is, like the Source Supreme, immortal. The open heavens are there, and nature's

living wonders to inspire him with faith in Providential love, thus revealed to him in fulness that has eyes to see. How can he doubt the measureless intelligence so fully spread and visibly throughout the universe, whence flow light and warmth to nurse him on this nether world, that he may grow, and rise, and worship, overawed and filled with gratitude for gifts divine, bestowed unasked? Let him of Samaël beware, however, the Tempter, who in human error revels. Enough of innate fervor is in man for him to draw soul-stirring inspiration from ethereal fountains, as the prophets did in ages ago.

Here ended the archangel, overpowered by a wave of radiance outshining what had seemed at first the brightest stream of the empyrean.

"Metatron's shadow yonder, the power of the Almighty," said the cherub with a smile, and faded like a cloudlet, his host vanishing with him.

Meanwhile, brighter and brighter shone the dazzling blaze, and a sound as of

myriad harps in angels' hands diffused rapturous bliss through endless space. On the waves of light and song, in the deepest blue, amidst a universe of ineffable glories, the infinite *Merchabah* glided through galaxies, as a regal equipage might pass through an atmosphere of golden dust. Whatever grows on earth shone in inexpressible beauty under the holiest beam, making nature an interminable paradise. From uncounted graveyards rose a host of happy beings, resurrected to new life and felicity. "Thine is the glory," they sang in grateful recognition of the grace received. Among them David recognized his friend Jonathan. He rushed to embrace him, when a cry of agony broke in upon his mystic vision.

"My face is torn, and I am bleeding—here is the accursed monster," cried Jonathan. "Help, it will tear out my eyes."

Samson's iron grip closed round the neck of the enraged beast, which, with the growl of a tiger, buried its claws in the flesh of the herculean driver.

"It is Yente's cat," yelled David at the

top of his voice. Now it was Samson's turn to call for assistance.

"Get a knife and kill her, kill her!" screamed the bleeding man. "There are twenty cats and devils in this ferocious brute," added he, vainly casting about for a Scriptural phrase.

In an instant the beast was swimming in its blood; David had plunged a knife into the vitals of the carnivorous monster. The beast died hard, and its last moans sent a chill through the blood of the men, convinced as they were that the cat had been animated by a malicious demon.

That the neighborhood was aroused by the commotion in Samson's yard, that the unheard-of ferocity of the cat was put to the credit of Yente's immortal hatred, and that Samson furnished a number of biblical quotations supposed to be applicable to the defeat of vile witchery, as illustrated by his heroism and his wounds, need hardly be said. The accident having become known early in the morning, crowds of people invaded Samson's home, all eager to see the

monstrous brute, and learn the details of the occurrence. Although assisted by his sons-in-law in giving the information required, Samson felt himself called upon in person to satisfy everyone to the best of his ability, and he acquitted himself so thoroughly of his self-imposed task, that he talked himself hoarse, and had no voice to join in the mournful recitations in the synagogue. The greatest sensation of the day, however, was reserved for a later hour, when the congregation had returned from visiting the graves of the dead, as is customary on the ninth of Ab. Then David unfolded his transcendental vision of the previous night, repeating the words he had heard, and drawing the picture of what he had seen with intense vividness. Was it not an adumbration of the much-prayed-for Messianic era? Samaël's discomfiture means Metatron's triumph, and Metatron is none else than the deathless Elijah, destined to precede the coming of the true Messiah.

Samson would have gone into a rhapsody of misapplied Scriptural allusions, had not

the cat's claws put a damper on his Messianic enthusiasm. Foreshadowed evil had turned into horrid reality. In view of Jonathan's bandaged face and Samson's patched limbs, Yente's vindictive ghost became an object of terror, seeing that there were many crawling, creeping, and bounding things left that the malignant breath of a witch might animate for evil. Samson had sinew enough to squeeze a score of live Yentes into jelly, but here was a phantom horror to be dealt with.

It was suggested that only another sorceress or wizard could counteract the invisible agencies of witchcraft, but the Rabbi threatened Samson with the ban, should he dare invoke the powers of darkness, heartfelt prayer being the only legitimate panoply of a true Israelite. The good man abandoned the idea as soon as the spiritual chief quoted Scripture against it. He endeavored to repeat the phrase told him in Balaam's name, and thereafter referred to the ancient wizard as "the *Goy* whose ass spoke in the Bible."

In a few days the excitement subsided,

and as weeks glided by without any remarkable developments, Samson and his family grew calm, and the solemn month of meditation preceding the great Holy Days engaged the serious attention of the pious congregation.

The old custom of rising before daybreak for the purpose of reciting *Selichoth*, that is, propitiatory invocations and prayers, is strictly adhered to wherever old Judaism rules supreme. Cudgel in hand, the beadle hurries from house to house, and knocks at the shutter of each, at the same time calling out with stentorian tones: "Get up to say *Selichoth*." Responding immediately, the pious gather in their places of worship to shed tears over their sins and aberrations.

During this earnest season Jonathan one morning thought that he had heard the beadle call him up to join the crowd in their early orisons. In fact, he was sure that he had heard Samson and David leave the house, after telling him to hurry up, and he was sorry to be the last of the family to enter the house of prayer. When he had

closed the door behind him, he found himself in a gusty, moonless atmosphere, and he accelerated his steps to reach the place dedicated to God. He was surprised to meet no person in the street at a time when he might have expected to see many take the same direction. Convinced that he was very late, he increased his speed until he was fairly running, and he rushed into the sacred building without realizing that not a sound was issuing therefrom. On entering he was petrified with horror. The place was crowded to the uttermost with unknown shapes, all attired in the garments of death. He was among the dead. A vapory luminousness, unaccountable as to source, showed a spectacle that made Jonathan's hair stand on end. A muffled hum indicated the presence of ghostly worshippers, who proceeded to environ the living man, cutting off his retreat, and forcing him toward the centre of the disembodied assembly. The humming was like the buzz of a distant swarm of bees, but the flitting of the shades, round and round, was unique

and too awful to be compared with anything in the concrete world. Only one had the power of speech, and his voice was not unfamiliar. "Pass him a *Seliche*," was the order.

Jonathan turned his head mechanically toward the shade that spoke; it was Selig, just as he had seen him in the hour of his wedding and death. From the opposite side of the spacious room, where the women's gallery was situated high above the heads of the men, an arm fully sixty feet long stretched forth to hand Jonathan the book. One look was sufficient to convince the terrified man that the attention was paid him by Yente. She was in her bridal attire, and a smile crossed her sinister countenance, so terrifying that Jonathan almost sank under his own weight.

He did not avail himself of the courtesy, and lost no time in looking for his friends of shorter limbs. Rushing towards the door, he found the audience as yielding as air. Once in the street, he sped homeward at a rate more creditable to his heels than to his

dignity. He felt considerably relieved on recognizing in the dimness the familiar outlines of his genial father-in-law. Taking a long breath, he unfolded the spectral tale of the longimaneous adventure. In answer, Samson, usually so unsophisticated, smiled so broad a smile that to make room for it his visage dilated to amazing dimensions, and shot forth a sixty yards tongue, which, like a huge serpent, he wound round his prodigious frame. This was too much for Jonathan. He ran to his home, where he found all sound asleep. On awakening, his wife discovered that he had swooned. Revived with difficulty, he told his tale, fell sick, raved about ghosts and goblins, and died.

Of course, there was great consternation in the community and a youthful widow in the house of Samson, who resented the hobgoblin's having borrowed his features to distort them for the ruin of his son-in-law. Instead of becoming the grandfather of the Messiah, he had a widowed daughter, and lived in perfect horror of something darker

to come. Nor did he stand alone in his gloomy forebodings. A sense of insecurity seized the entire population of Choinick, including non-Jews, whose dread of witchcraft exceeds that of their Hebrew neighbors.

Benjamin, the lessee of the public bath, offered to state under oath that he had seen Yente, Selig, and the cat glide out of the dead woman's deserted shanty at a late hour in the evening, and vanish in the air, and children reported that they had seen the cat on the hearth in the hovel long after she was known to be dead.

A portentous symptom was the incessant howling of dogs at night, heretofore rarely noticed, except after the death of some notorious witch or wizard. In short, whatever superstition could be associated with the abandoned nest of a dead sorceress, was linked with the miserable hole once occupied by the crone and her cat.

After the burial of the lamented Jonathan, it occurred to David that the dead man was bound by an oath to communicate with him about things in the world of mys-

tery. David's anxiety to prevent the promised information from reaching him was not small. How could a ghost be restrained from surprising him in the dead of night with harrowing details of another life? The circumstances of Jonathan's death suggested blood-curdling possibilities. What was to be done? Acting on the Rabbi's advice, ten honored elders repaired to the grave of Jonathan, and solemnly informed him that his friend cheerfully relieved him of his promise to reveal the unrevealed; that, in fact, he would be pleased to be left unmolested. To make things doubly sure, the warning was added, that it was in the power of the living to make it uncomfortable for the dead by excluding certain names from the prayers for the dead in the synagogue.

This ruse worked as long as the sun shone, but when twilight set in, Samson felt uneasy, and David fairly trembled at the likelihood of a nocturnal call that might end his existence.

A new sensation was created by Benja-

min's sickness. He lay speechless, stricken by a mysterious something, which his wife thought must have been either Yente's evil eye or Selig's stick, both of which, he asserted, he had felt repeatedly when he had met them between the deserted hovel and the bath, threatening him and vanishing in the air. Benjamin died.

The gruesome wedding scene ever before his mind's eye, and the dark happenings of a near past fresh in his memory, it needed more than ordinary courage for David to see the shades of night gather without a palpitating heart. To add to his dismay, his Leah refused to stay with him at a time when companionship was a precious boon to him. The young woman feared that Jonathan's ghost might emerge from the dark with news which she was far from anxious to learn. Samson had to fill the place of his daughter, who went over to Miriam's room. At any other time David would have objected to him as a substitute for his wife; as matters stood, however, Samson's kindness was duly appreciated.

This cloud darkened Samson's home until time dispersed it. Uneventful years passed by, and the conclusion was reached, that either the measure taken by the pious men had had the desired effect, which was thought likely enough, or the dead were dead, and were not permitted to reveal what Providence decreed was to remain hidden. It was argued that, if the dead were allowed to divulge to the living all they knew, nothing would be left to inspire awe. Furthermore, there were such horrors to be revealed as can be faced only by the dead, who can stand a great deal more than the living, and this could not be denied.

This reasoning induced Leah, to poor Samson's great delight, to resume connubial relations with her disconsolate husband, and Kalmon, the *Shadchan*, was on the outlook for a respectable widower to make Miriam happy.

One morning there was great stir and agitation in and about the house of the honest driver. Pale faces, tears, the Rabbi's presence, the undertaker's expectant

look, all told a tale of sorrow. What had happened? David dead? No. Alive? No. Sick? No. What then? In a few moments it was known that David was neither alive nor dead. He was in a trance. His eyes were open, his breast hove and fell, laboring to inhale the vital element; his pulse indicated feverish heat within, but he was manifestly lost to all consciousness. In a few minutes the house was besieged by throngs of friends, the whole congregation. Everybody suggested a remedy, and every remedy was tried in vain. They gave him snuff, but he would not sneeze; they tickled him, but he would not laugh; they held a burning taper before his open eyes, it did not disturb him in the least; the sacred *shophar* was sounded in his ear, he moved no muscle; a hot plate was applied to his bare soles, he remained passive. Yet, though he was dead in appearance, life was visibly flowing through his veins. The people were amazed, and the non-Jewish physician assured them that it was one of the rarest phenomena for a man to be dead and alive at the same time.

The question arose whether a similar occurrence was anywhere recorded in Israel's traditional or legendary lore. Certainly; here are two illustrations: A famous sage died. His wife, instead of giving him up for burial, kept his body in an upper chamber, believing, as she did, that the righteous never die. There he continued for many years undecayed, yea, life-like, though unfed and breathless. The wonder of the tale is heightened, when it is added that the man having died without leaving a competence to sustain his family, the brave widow helped herself by causing contending parties to state their differences before the door of her dead husband, and his voice gave the decisions. The fees thus secured supported the family. This went on for eighteen years, when the widow, who daily attended to the cleanliness of her husband's body, found a little worm in one of his ears, and took it as a hint that the time had come to restore him to eternal rest.

Of another light in Israel it is recorded, that he was put into a trance for seventy

years merely to convince him that even so long a space may, by the will of God, pass like a dream. The venerable teacher had not been able to realize how a banishment of seventy years from Zion could be spoken of as a dream. Pondering on the Psalm in which this expression occurs, he passed out of the city gate, and, feeling tired, stretched himself under a tree to rest. An impenetrable maze of shrubs and foliage, called forth for the purpose, hid the sleeper for seventy years from the eye of man and brute, the seven decades gliding by like a dream of as many minutes. Awaking from what he believed to have been a nap, the sage proceeded homeward. What was it that struck him with astonishment? Neither the scenery nor the surroundings appeared the same as he had known them. He did not recognize his beloved home. The town was full of unknown people. At his own school he found teachers he had never met, surrounded by a generation as foreign to him as he was to them. Was it a dream? On hearing him-

self quoted as an authority of a former age, he understood that he had undergone a most wonderful experience. He had slept seventy years. Feeling himself a stranger in a time for which he was not intended, he prayed to be withdrawn, and his prayer was granted.

When Samson heard that David's trance might extend over a period of seventy years, in which case he should have two young widows to provide for and a half dead son-in-law in the bargain, he exclaimed in despair: "This is as bad as all the bad things in the Book of Job and a little worse. You can do something with a live man. You can do something with a dead man. But what shall one do with a man who is neither alive nor dead?" The logic of the statement did not change the case.

A new fear was aroused by the doctor's hint that, should the trance continue for weeks, science would demand the dissection of David's body, in which case it would have to be transported to the college of anatomy in the University of Kieff. This coincided with the popular prejudice con-

cerning the infernal doings of doctors, when their curiosity is roused as to how some incurable disease is healed, or why a certain ill cannot be cured. In each case the dissecting knife is applied. Samson was horrified at the idea, and the doctor got what he expected, a handsome bribe to keep his peace. But this apprehension was soon removed. The trance lasted only a day and a night.

When David returned to consciousness, he thrilled with awe those who listened to his account of his meeting with Jonathan. Death, Jonathan had told him, was by no means so terrible a spectre as he is assumed to be. Death is neither covered all over with eyes, as tradition paints him; nor does he brandish a burning sword; nor does he bear bladders filled with deadly gall, nor vials full of poison. Death is a large cherub of pale countenance and placid eyes, soaring on two wings, and gently drawing life out of him whose end has come. Here is Jonathan's report :

“ When I beheld the winged cherub over-

shadow my bed, I felt that my hour had come. Like an immense eagle poising over his prey, the dark power hovered over me, draining my life, until I felt a sensation as though a crust of ice enfolded me, leaving me in utter oblivion.

“How long I remained in this inanimate condition, I am unable to say. At a certain moment there came a something over me that disturbed my rest. That something kept me awake in spite of the insidious attacks of overwhelming sleep. The narrow walls which enclosed me suited my condition, my body being perfectly content to rest where it lay encased. The influence that worked on me from without, however, proved too strong to be long resisted, so that I was bodily raised out of my grave to face an angel in silvery garb. He looked majestic, covered a league with his outspread wings, and diffused lustre like that of the unclouded moon. He called me with domestic familiarity, and informed me that he was sent to lead me to the place where my record had been examined and found wanting.

"Off he swept like lightning, drawing me after him, like a leaf caught in a cyclone. He plunged into an abyss with so precipitous a fall as in a second sent us adown thousands of miles through dense night. We landed in a desolate rotunda, hemmed in by black rocks of smoking sulphur. The mephitic vapors were terrible, but they did not hurt me.

"Before me stood the radiant angel of justice, balance in hand, on which my life was weighed. I could review it from beginning to end, a perfect individuality bearing my impress. The volume of its spotted body weighed down the dark side of the balance; its limbs dangled on the other side, signifying my meritorious deeds outbalanced by the weight of sin.

"In the next moment the dismal space teemed with legions black and white, the bright ones shielding me from the fury of the black demons, who threatened to tear me to pieces. They were all my own, typifying my good and my evil deeds, each host claiming its master. Among the fiends

were Yente and Selig, who incited the goblins against me. It was a critical moment. The load of evil was so entirely out of proportion to the amount of good that I gave myself up as lost. While the furious war was waged between the adverse hosts, there emerged on a sudden lame Hirsh, my first instructor in Hebrew, whose chronic poverty I often relieved by the small attentions we are in the habit of showing to those that watch over our childhood. Hirsh, you know, was more of a kind nurse than a pedagogue, watching affectionately over a herd of little tots entrusted to his care, teaching them the Hebrew alphabet, and recounting marvellous tales, in which the ever-roaming Elijah was the central hero. The man came halting, one mass of bundles and baskets and a variety of things received at our home on all occasions. These he threw in together with himself for my salvation. Down came the fateful scale with a click in my favor. The cherub of mercy appeared on the scene, and, by a touch of his wand, raised my soul from the black abode.

"Off we darted with the speed of light toward a great blaze, which broke on us from the first of the seven heavens. At the entrance of the first heaven, I was met by father Abraham, shining like the sun. He knew me, and welcomed me with a smile of paternal benignity.

"Your lame teacher saved you from many years of torment in yon dark abodes, reserved for the deluded of the erring race. Ah, if my descendants on earth only knew how insignificant things combine to stamp a man good or bad, they would be more careful in their words and dealings. What have I done to be holding thus the gate of the heavens? My knowledge of things in general was limited, but my heart was faithful and unselfish. As long as all-controlling selfishness sways the minds of the race, it is vain to count on the Messianic redemption. Who cannot cherish the virtues associated with my name? It is so much easier to be righteous than to be crooked that only idiots deliver themselves to vice.'

"This plain talk of our patriarch re-

minded me of my wife below, and I asked my angelic guide to let me have a glimpse of Miriam. He informed me that earth was so far beneath that it would take a stone, dropped from the spot whereon we stood, five cycles to strike solid ground. He further stated, that the upper skies were many thousand times higher, one above the other, and above the seventh heaven the *Merchabah* occupied more space than all the heavens combined, more than figures can tell, or human brain conceive of.

“I should have felt sorry to be so far away from my dear Miriam, had it not been for the celestial wonders that engaged my attention, especially the heavenly music made by cherub choirs, wearing garlands of unfading flowers and shining like burnished gold under a perfect sun. The delights are enhanced by the acquired power of flight from heaven to heaven, from star to star. It is a felicity, which words cannot describe, because inconceivable in the state of mortality.

“When he had told me all this, the

angel of mercy bade me adieu, and I was left to look out for myself, which implied no hardship whatsoever. There being neither hunger nor thirst, the soul feeds on the numberless glories spread in profusion.

"Other beings joined me, and one proposed that we ascend to the second sky. They were all admitted by Moses except myself. The lawgiver informed me that there was an item in his records against me, precluding my immediate entrance into the higher Elysian regions. I had to fulfil the agreement we had entered into before our marriage. With the utmost velocity I hurried earthward, promising myself deep joy from a visit to my dearest ones. Great was my disappointment on finding it impossible to commune with a soul enshrined in a mortal frame. I had no means of approaching my consort, and how acquit myself of my promise to you? The latter problem I solved by throwing you into a trance."

Here Jonathan closed, promising to give more information in course of time. David assured his friend that he knew

enough to last him all his life. The only favor he asked was, that Yente be hereafter restrained from molesting Samson and his family. It was at this point that David's trance was broken. The good fellow sneezed heartily, and was again among the living.

Henceforth there was peace in Choinick. Yente's hovel was demolished, and Benjamin's widow was allowed to use of it whatever could be burned to heat the bath. The strangest incident in the affair was the discovery of the hoard supposed to have been stolen by David. It appeared that in spite of Yente's terrific cat her miserable hovel had been honey-combed by a colony of rats. The rodents had undermined the hearth, thus causing the treasure to sink under its own weight out of sight and beyond reach. David's innocence was established, and the Rabbi decided that the recovered hoard was to be devoted to the alleviation of misery among the faithful in the Holy Land.

CZAR NICHOLAS THE FIRST AND SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE

THE *Yeshiba* is a Jewish College in Russia at which nothing but the Talmud and its commentaries is taught, and a pupil at such schools, of which many exist, is called *Yeshiba-Bachur*, a synonym for student of the Talmud. The head of each of these Colleges is honored as the *Rosh ha-Yeshiba*. His office is to expound daily except Friday and Saturday a portion of the *Gemara* with pilpulistic subtleties, which the first or highest class of the institution must know fully, and the second class partly. The students are given efficient assistance by a "repeater," in this case not a revolver, but a thorough Talmudist engaged for the purpose. The third or preparatory class is enjoined to listen attentively, but is not required to know more than the plain text and its commentaries. The examination takes place at the end of

the week. It is characteristic of the *Yeshiboth* that the bulk of their students come from other cities, and wholly depend for their board on the kindness of the towns-people. Some are fortunate enough to become regular boarders in hospitable homes, but this is rare. The *Bachur* is prepared to eat his seven weekly dinners in seven different houses, and to sleep among scores of his fellows on the benches of the large school-house, his head resting on the pillow he has brought in his box along with a number of nondescript articles. Coming as he does from an humble home, he does not feel the need of a dormitory. He is ever in excellent humor, unless he has missed a couple of meals, which happens only too often, is ambitious to be distinguished and promoted, and is strongly inclined to migrate in the hope of securing more comfort in another *Yeshiba*.

There are famous *Yeshiboth* in Russia, open only to such as are able to pass a very exacting examination in the unnumbered chapters of traditional lore. In exceptional instances,

one man of means supports the whole institution; in others, the *Yeshiba* is sustained by subscriptions and donations. The *Shadchan*, of course, has his eye on the "lights" of these schools, and many an unbeautiful maiden of rich parents has been made happy by her marriage to a brilliant *Bachur*. The "lights" are exceptions, however. As a rule, the *Bachurim* are left to themselves, but their isolation and monotonous life are greatly relieved by the sociability that prevails among them, by the songs and the wit of some, and by the stories of others. Biblical plays are composed and produced, and if there is anything in the city to be laughed at, you may count on its comical discussion or reproduction in the *Yeshiba*. In fact, the poor *Bachur* is every inch a student, and youth expresses itself in him as it does in the attendants of the University. He is credited, moreover, with great shrewdness, and many a story is current of the strategies he resorts to, where miserliness closes the door against him. Here is an instance.

It is a rule among the Jewish residents

of villages to keep "open table," that is, to welcome any who may come to their hospitable board, in view of the fact that peddlers are poor people, and cannot get *kosher* food in a village. This admirable hospitality is not emulated by the modest tavern-keeper, who often declines to sacrifice his small earnings to the patriarchal ideal. Now, it happened that a poor *Bachur*, on his way from one *Yeshiba* to another, arrived on a Friday at a place in which there was but one Jewish resident, the inn-keeper, and he not of the hospitable kind. He was received very coldly, and, being hungry and having no money, he contemplated with alarm the prospect of enjoying a long fast instead of a feast. He smelt the dinner, and saw the fuming dishes served. His mouth watered, but he was left severely alone. An idea struck him. With a face as earnest as that of a priest celebrating high mass, he called the host aside, looked furtively around, as if to assure himself that his secret would not be overheard by a third party, and asked in a whisper what he sup-

posed a diamond about as large as a pigeon egg and as scintillating as a star was worth? The question surprised the unfriendly host, whose features, hitherto as rigid as those of a police magistrate, softened into a dubious smile. If the young fellow had the jewel he spoke of, and did not know its value, what a chance to make a fortune!

"A diamond of the kind and size you describe may be worth two hundred roubles," said the shrewd tavern-keeper with the air of an experienced jeweler.

"Two hundred roubles! Why, Shapirsky of Yurevitz told me that the precious stone would bring at least four hundred," asserted the *Bachur*.

"It all depends upon what kind of a stone it is," remarked the inhospitable host, anxious to secure the confidence of the youth. "It may be worth even more than that."

"If a man has a jewel like the one I should so much desire to sell, he, of course, tries to dispose of it at the highest price

possible," explained the hungry wanderer, and resumed his seat in the cold corner, while the other looked for his wife to enkindle her mind by the brilliancy of the diamond. The woman was dazzled by the report of the sparkling stone, and the next moment she stood before the young man, urging him to partake of a meal which she had set out for him in the adjoining room, to make himself sociable, and stay with them over the Sabbath. King Solomon's crown jewels were the topic of the holy day, and the youthful roamer had a good deal to say about the treasures of Ophir, so that the host and the hostess thought and dreamed of nothing but diamonds. The Sabbath over, the kind tavern-keeper offered to hitch up his horse and take his friend of the jewel a few miles in the direction of his destination. The offer was accepted, but the student talked of everything but jewels. When finally asked to produce the stone that he had for sale, he said that he had never had one.

"You have no diamond?" cried the

greedy villager disappointed. "Why did you inquire about its value so earnestly, and talk about its brilliant quality?"

"Why? Shall I allow people to fool me in case I find a diamond, as others have done?" returned the *Bachur*. "Should not a man know something of so important a matter?"

The host asked no further questions, and turned his horse homeward.

As for the *Bachur's* inventive genius, let the following two tales speak for themselves.

* * * * *

When the death of Alexander the First placed his son, Nicholas the First, on the throne of the Czars, the Russian Hebrews did not count on considerate treatment from the new Czar. All they prayed for was to be left unmolested in the exercise of their religion, however unenviable their state might otherwise be. But, like all the Romanoffs, Nicholas was a very orthodox Czar. His anxiety to bring his Jews under the eaves of the Greek Catholic Church assumed the nature of a passion. "One

Church, one Russia," was his motto, inherited from a rigidly autocratic lineage. Neither Gibraltar nor Sebastopol are impregnable fortresses; both have been stormed and taken. Not so the settled mind of a thoroughly orthodox Jew. In his case the all-conquering Alexanders and Napoleons have failed. That phenomenal specimen of ancient humanity has periodically been subjected to a variety of theological experiments, with the disheartening result that, after he has been starved, flayed, stewed, roasted alive, immured, impaled, and has passed through almost every operation performed with the thumbscrew and the dissecting knife, he continues to live as though all these anatomic attentions had been paid to the man in the moon. "Once a Jew, forever a Jew," is his motto, and he has taught the world that airy nothings may survive emperors and empires.

Nicholas discovered this early, and set about devising means and methods of conversion, other than those associated with the career of Thomas Torquemada. The ortho-

dox Czar made up his mind to "beat the world's record." If the adult Hebrew was a thing the devil could not save from perdition, what might not be done with his unfossilized brood? Once removed from parental influence, the youthful offspring of stiff-necked Judah would sooner or later submit to pressure, especially if the life-saving dispensation is impressed with military emphasis.

Thus it came to pass that under Nicholas the First Slavonic Israel experienced oppression equal in many respects to that sustained by the Jews under the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. An imperial Ukase commanded that Jewish boys be enrolled in the army at an early age, at which resistance to conversion might easily be overcome either by corporal punishment or by temptations. The Ukase spread consternation among families with boys answering the demand of the inexorable autocrat. The children had to be delivered at a fixed date. Desolation and anguish reigned in thousands of Jewish houses. The Chassidim in

their bitterness of heart roared out furiously against the cruelties of Edom, and watched the starry heavens for a sign indicative of Providential displeasure, but the stars took no notice of Israel's sorrow. The imperial will was enforced yearly, multiplying tears, misery, and converts, and mothers ran to the sacred Ark of the Covenant to pray that their children die rather than be forced into an idolatrous Church.

What was the joy and surprise of the Russian Hebrews, when they heard that one of their faith, Moses Montefiore, had been received with honors at the court of the Czar; that he had come to St. Petersburg to plead in behalf of his persecuted brethren, and that his petition was likely to relieve their distress? The very name of the great philanthropist awakened sweet hope. Moses is a name engraved on the Jewish heart—Moses son of Amram; Moses Maimonides; Moses Mendelssohn, had not each had a mission to fulfil in his time? And now Moses Montefiore! Henceforth he was spoken of as the fourth great luminary in Israel's

annals, and him the modern Pharaoh was bound to respect, lest the ten plagues of ancient Egypt descend on the Czar's domains.

It was felt that nothing short of a miracle could have induced the fanatic Czar, who had sworn to uproot the seed of Judah, to honor a Hebrew. But is not our history a succession of miracles? Acrostics were composed in honor of the deliverer, and prayers offered for his prosperity. His tour through several Russian cities with large Jewish congregations turned out a triumphal pageant, and there was no end to the tales describing his reception elsewhere. By the Caliph of Estamboul Montefiore had been treated like a sovereign. Czar Nicholas had appointed a special palace for the entertainment of his Jewish guest, had detailed a regiment of his body-guard to do honor to the Anglo-Hebrew millionaire, and had had food prepared for him in compliance with the dietary injunctions of the *Torah*.

It was asserted that the vast wealth of

the admirable Moses made Croesus seem a poor fellow in comparison. Montefiore, everybody was convinced, had immense vaults stored with bags of gold and precious stones. He had offered the Czar ten roubles for each of His Majesty's Hebrew subjects. The Czar, of course, would not think of accepting the offer, the article being too precious to be thus cheaply disposed of. There was no doubt, however, that ere long Montefiore would have a consultation with his friend Rothschild, and the two Anglo-Jewish nabobs together would make a more reasonable proposition to the Czar, the object being to restore scattered Israel to the Land of Promise. Was not Rothschild a fit prince to ascend the throne of David? And where was the man to dispute the right of the world-renowned and honored Moses to the high priesthood?

Montefiore's enormous wealth did not in the least interfere with his humility, his love of the poor, his devotion to his God, and his ardor of worship. He had a mentor in the shape of a wonderful clock, which,

at the expiration of each hour, before striking time, played a funeral march, followed by the heart-stirring call: "Moses, Moses, another of thy counted hours is gone, gone. Remember thy grave, thy grave, thy grave!" A still stronger reminder was a coffin made of plain pine wood, ready to encase his mortal remains. To curb vanity which riches like his might beget, the good Moses daily stretched himself for an hour in the unadorned sarcophagus, and so well succeeded in keeping the frailty of mortal man before his mental eye that prayer never departed from his lip, and the needy never turned to him in vain. A Jew in every atom of his being, Montefiore loved even the *Goyim*, whose misery he tried to alleviate. Montefiore's wife was worthy of her philanthropic husband. She was on terms of friendship with the Queen of England, but would not shake hands with Czar Nicholas, because he had caused so much pain to her sisters in Russia, nor would she wear a jewel so long as her co-religionists suffered oppression. She had traveled with her consort every-

where, but would not honor Muscovy with her presence, until Nicholas revoked his cruel Ukase against Jewish children. Even Montefiore's bill-of-fare was not unknown to the *Bachur* of the *Yeshiba*. To comply with the behests of the fathers, who enjoin abject frugality upon the student of the sacred Law, the noble Baronet ate bread and onions during the week, but royalty could not outdo the sumptuousness of his table on the holy Sabbath.

The hospitality the noble Moses extended to the Czar of all the Russias while His Imperial Majesty visited Great Britain was as sumptuous as the feast given by Ahasverus in the capital of ancient Persia. In the paradisiacal park of the Baronet, for a distance of several miles, the finest Oriental rugs were spread for His Majesty's feet to tread upon. The entrance to the palatial residence was paved with plates of solid silver, artistically fitted to each other. The vestibule was finished in gold, and the walls of the drawing-room presented a blaze of gems such as no monarch had seen before.

The marvel of the palace, however, was its dining-room. On entering this apartment accompanied by his suit, the Czar was astonished to see the royal banquet hang in mid-air, apparently without support. The Czar's confusion was not small when he was invited to take a seat. There was no chair in the room; neither was there a table, but the dishes were there. Nicholas was at a loss how to get out of the embarrassing position with dignity. "Is it not customary in this land for the host to take his seat first?" asked the wily monarch. Hereupon the Hebrew host permitted his capacious proportions to rest on what looked like nothing, but was assuredly something solid, or it could not have supported the considerable weight of the corpulent Baronet. There the great philanthropist was seated on the air, as it were, his feet dangling several inches above the floor. The Czar looked like the man in the play who tries to stab Hamlet's ghost. He was willing enough to follow the host's example, but no chair was in sight. The

generous Hebrew, perceiving His Majesty's perplexity, finally led his royal guest to a seat, which the Czar felt to be as real as if made of rock.

The mystery was soon solved. The dining-room was fitted up with furniture of crystal so fine that only the most experienced eye could detect it. There was nothing in the world to match it. Envy seized the heart of the mean Nicholas. By a cunning tumble he managed to break, not alone his own seat, but several chairs near him. Montefiore answered smilingly in reply to the Czar's hypocritical regret at what he termed an accident: "Sire, I can furnish every palace in your empire with invisible conveniences and commodities from top to bottom. We possess the secret of manufacturing these things in as large quantities as we care to do."

The appointments of the hall wherein the Czar was entertained were so costly that no monarch could have afforded them without draining the resources of his land. Yet it was not its magnificence that astonished

the Emperor. There was a bewitching something floating in the atmosphere, a marvelous odor, causing everyone to feel intoxicating joy. The guests were conscious of a delightful drowsiness, and the Czar was the first to rest himself on a superb divan, inviting the others to do likewise. No sooner were they seated than a mysterious symphony filled the spacious room, and enraptured the souls of the distinguished company. Answering to the touch of a bell, seven angels emerged from curtained niches, performed a graceful dance in the air, and vanished like apparitions. When the music died away, the Baronet requested the royal party to rise and then to resume their seats. This was necessary to continue the concert, which was a product of the invaluable divans.

Such were some of the curiosities Montefiore exhibited to surprise the enemy of his race. For a definite purpose the wise Moses referred to the great resources of the Muscovite Empire. "Yes, we have gold enough in our realms to have a chain

forged stretching all the way from St. Petersburg to London and thence to Kamtchatka," remarked the Czar boastfully. As the Hebrew expressed no surprise at the extravagant statement, Nicholas asked him how long a chain he could make, thinking that he would thus be able to test his enormous wealth.

"Long enough, Sire, to stretch through all the space between the Holy Ark of my synagogue to the blessed throne of God above the seventh heaven," was Montefiore's calm reply. Nicholas smiled.

"You are undoubtedly the richest Jew on earth. We have some wealthy Hebrews in our Empire, but they are not the subjects on whom we can safely build," said the Czar.

"It has ever been my wish to be the best rather than the richest Jew, Sire, but I am neither the one nor the other. In wealth, my friend Rothschild is by far my superior, and in the Jewish quality of true, heroic self-abnegation, there are thousands of Hebrews in your Majesty's domains whose equal I cannot claim to be. There are As-

monean Israelites in Russia, Sire," asserted the host.

"We should be pleased to agree with you, sir; but are you in earnest?" asked the Emperor, not a little surprised at the positive assertion of the Baronet.

"As earnest as death, Sire," returned Moses with unfaltering voice. "It is a matter easily tested. It costs me little to be a faithful Jew in England, but in your Majesty's domains"—here he stopped short.

Serious thoughtfulness settled on the forehead of the Czar, as he said: "We have always thought our Hebrew subjects the meanest within the bounds of our Empire, yea, perhaps the meanest people in the world; exclusive, deceitful, parsimonious, fanatic, treacherous, and whatever is bad in humanity. They will not assimilate with their countrymen, do what we please. They persist in living out of touch with the other sons of Russia, a foreign element, praying for Jerusalem, and cursing the adherents of the cross," asseverated the Czar emphatically.

"Sire, it is their misfortune to be thus misunderstood," rejoined Sir Moses, "their sad condition making them appear worse than their brethren elsewhere. We are all of the same stock, springing from the same patriarchal family, inspired by the same religion, worshipping the same God, cultivating the same literature, and cherishing the same hope of one day seeing mankind united as one brotherhood. There is a difference between the British and the Russian Jew, but it arises from the fact that in this land we bathe in the sunshine of human equality, which is denied my brethren under your Majesty's rule. It lies not in human nature, Sire, to return confidence for distrust, or love for hatred. The Jew has character, alas, and human dignity!"

"What is the Jew wanted for now? What is he living for?" exclaimed the Czar. "Do you still dream of spiritual pre-eminence among the nations of the earth? If God be love, and His word truth, they are destined to be universal blessings, not the exclusive heritage of a few insignificant tribes. Why

is Jesus rejected by the Jew? Did he not live and die a Jew? His love embraced the world. Whom does the Jew love? What has Jesus done to be spurned? Would this world be better, happier, without Christianity? Conquer your Jewish prejudice, sir host. If Christianity be a delusion, it is the greatest, the divinest in history. If humanity is to be united in heart, soul, and God-worship, who is working for the union? The Jew? Your Judaism holds out no redemption for the race; Christianity does. Give me the religion that stands first and last for universal union and harmony. Is it your religion? A creed that stands for human exclusiveness and tribal choice is an institution of the devil" wound up Nicholas, shaking his fist.

But the autocratic ruler had to deal with a Moses, whose reverence, piety, and wisdom were not to be daunted by a display of finely spun phrases.

"Your Majesty is right," cried the Hebrew, his eyes flashing fire. "A creed that stands for human exclusiveness and tribal choice



is an institution of the devil. That is the reason why I am a Jew; for the synagogue stands for unity, and union, and unison—unity of God, union of men, and unison in God-worship. Is not this our prophet's Messianic dream? And is it Judaism that retards the wished-for consummation of the divine Utopia? Sire, is it just to impugn Israel for ministering to his own salvation, and credit the Church with world-redeeming endeavors? Where shall the Jew yield? If Jesus were a Jew of to-day, he would certainly not worship in the Trinitarian Church, nor would he substitute baptism for our fundamental blood-covenant. Would our surrender to a creed so entirely at variance with our monotheistic ideal be a step in advance toward a sublimer conception of God and His Universe? The holiness and humanity taught by the synagogue are unequalled. The Jew feels at home wherever man is humanized. His mission is not to conquer the world by forced conversions, but by making life an illustration of the golden rule, which is the kernel of our faith.

We cannot, will not assimilate with denominations which violate our central truth of Divine Unity. Why should I go to the Church or the Mosque to taste of adulterated food, which I have in original purity in my synagogue?

"I admit Christianity to be a step toward Judaism. Jesus and Mohammed are to me the same as Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, and Socrates. We venerate wisdom, extol virtue, but worship no man; no, not even Moses. There is one figure to whom I individually pay hero-worship. It is Job, the martyr of the world; heroic in his mighty resistance to all the woes and throes of outrageous fate; sublime in his reflections on life's unsolved mystery; majestic in his interrogation of powers that answer not; divine in his sweet resignation, and triumphant in a struggle superhuman endurance alone could have sustained. Job is the allegory of Israel's martyrdom, Sire, the type of the agonized Jew. The Church and the Mosque are monuments of Jewish conquest, and Israel's misery is the

monumental pyramid of man's immortal shame!"

The Czar's eye measured the proportions of the philanthropic Hebrew with an expression of mute wonder, unused as he was to be thus encountered and defeated beyond hope of regaining the field. There remained nothing for His Majesty but to beat an honorable retreat from the arena, and Nicholas did it gracefully. Turning to his attendants, who wondered at the boldness of the Hebrew, the Emperor observed:

"We should like to have with us at this moment some of our learned metropolitans and others of our Archierey, to prove our just claim to religious ascendancy over the old faith. However, we go hence, sir host, impressed with the conviction that the matter has two sides. Our Jews, we are grieved to affirm, are not a class to be loved or admired; yet have we never heard of a Hebrew soldier's disobedience to his superior or disloyalty to his sovereign. We shall give this question our best attention, Sir Moses," was the Czar's last remark.

All the Czar did, however, was to talk over the matter with his kind-hearted son, the Czarowitch Alexander, who, on ascending his father's throne, remembered it, and did much to ameliorate the painful situation of his Jewish subjects.

THE CZAR IN ROTHSCHILD'S CASTLE

THE royal treatment the Czar had experienced at the mansion of Moses Montefiore moved his curiosity to see the yet more magnificent palace of the world-renowned Rothschild. No sooner did the millionaire learn of the Emperor's wish, than a cordial invitation was extended, which was graciously accepted. Was it necessary for the Baron to make preparations to receive his imperial guest? Not at all. His palatial residence was always in a Solomonic state of splendor, such as no Caliph could have sustained without reducing his realm to poverty. In fact, at least half of this world's treasures are stored in Rothschild's vaults. What renders this Hebrew most formidable is his possession of King Solomon's signet-ring, the very seal that enabled the ancient despot to make the demon Ashmodai do his bidding. In

other words, Rothschild has power over agencies inaccessible to other mortals. Kings are afraid of him, and the fortress of Sebastopol would never have fallen, had he had cause to favor Russia. He was friendly to Great Britain, and the doom of the Muscovite army was sealed.

The reception and entertainment offered the autocrat of all the Russias by the man who thus controls the destiny of nations was marked by incidents well known in the *Yeshiboth*. That the carriages sent for His Majesty the Czar and his attendants were marvels of workmanship, and had wheels of precious metal and seats soft as air, need hardly be alluded to. The conveyances were drawn by horses of Egyptian breed, sired by those which King Solomon introduced into his capital after he had married the daughter of the lord ruling over the domains of the Nile. The trappings were made of purple, and studded with stars of gold. Artfully hidden jewels illumined the inside of the imperial equipage. All this, however, is referred to as a mere bagatelle

in the great display of wealth that made Israel's enemies pale with envy.

A rather comical incident of the visit was caused by a mysterious purse of gold, which came very near costing one of the Muscovite boyars his nose, to the great amusement of the Czar and his suit. It was a Satanic temptation, a golden trap. The insidious treasure lay on the ground in the heart of the millionaire's estate, before the entrance to the palace, as though some one had lost it. For a genuine Russian to pass so tempting a thing as a purse of gold without trying to lay hold on it, is a psychology impossibility. The noble Slav could not imagine that the confounded purse was the instrument of a treacherous scheme. What the unsophisticated Russian beheld was a purse transparent enough to leave no doubt as to its contents.

Here is what happened. The heavy portals of gilded workmanship swung wide open to receive the royal party. The carriages rolled on for many miles through superb gardens, covered with rare shrubbery and

delicious flowers, as in Solomon's famous parks in song-consecrated Zion, in which he entertained the Queen of Sheba. Birds made music, brooks murmured, cascades bounded over barriers, fountains played, parrots screamed, all conspiring to make the surroundings an Eden of delight. Presently, as the imperial party left their conveyances, one of the distinguished attendants, a nobleman of no small importance, caught sight of the purse, and, by a strategic movement, managed to come within grasping distance. No sooner did he lay his hand thereon, than presto! a black cuckoo, with the screech of a devil's bird, responded to the touch, a response which exasperated His Highness. Darting down with the rapidity of lightning, the naughty bird fastened its iron bill on the nose of the astonished courtier. In very emphatic German the distressed nobleman cried, "Zum Kuckuk," but all in vain. The infernal creature would not relax its hold, until the unfortunate Slav, with more haste than heroism, dropped the forbidden treasure. It fell exactly where it

had lain before, and the bird disappeared like an apparition. The Russians looked embarrassed, but Nicholas laughed heartily when the joke was explained to him. The piece of machinery had not its like in the world. A great Kabbalist had made it for the generous millionaire.

"Who made that devilish fowl for you, Monsieur le Baron?" asked the Czar.

"One of your Majesty's subjects," answered Rothschild significantly.

"One of our subjects?" cried the monarch, visibly surprised.

"One of Judah's suffering children in your Majesty's Empire," reiterated the proud Hebrew.

There was a look of interrogation in the Czar's eye, but the sagacious host said nothing more, and his imperial guest was soon within the walls of the palace. Many were the surprises in store for the Emperor, each apartment exhibiting an excess of costly articles, unequalled by anything seen in royal palaces. As in the residence of Sir Moses Montefiore, the dining-room was

a most remarkable combination of art and magic. In reality it contained absolutely nothing to see or to eat, the walls being bare and the floor empty. Nicholas, who had hitherto succeeded in suppressing every sign of surprise, remembering the invisible furniture of Montefiore's dining-room, asked the host whether he was to be seated on an invisible chair, and fed with impalpable dishes; or whether he was to be served on the floor with manna raining through the ceiling?

"Neither one thing nor the other, Sire," replied the host dryly. "Here is the service intended for your Majesty and your Majesty's attendants."

Saying this, Rothschild touched a knob. Immediately was heard a distant rumbling, followed by a cracking and bursting of walls, a falling and tumbling of ceilings, panels, and pillars, as though an earthquake were shaking the castle. In a trice there was an amazing transformation, and the scene looked like a dream woven by genii. The Czar stood perplexed. Could those

immovable fairies, stationed around golden tables, whereon dishes fit for angel royalties were spread, be real, tangible creatures? And those chairs set with precious jewels, each one fit to be a ruler's throne, could they be genuine? All doubt vanished the moment a concert by invisible instruments caused the airy beings to move and serve the Emperor and his train, their voices mingling with the instrumental music, which filled the air with celestial harmony.

"It was not one of our Hebrew subjects that devised this, Monsieur le Baron? We should like to know him, if he be one of ours," observed the Czar ironically.

"Pardon, Sire, the Kabbala, the mystic science, is possessed by none to so high a degree as by the Hebrews under your Majesty's rule. To one of them I am indebted for a power worth all the kingdoms on earth. Should your Majesty condescend to spend the coming night here, it will be my pleasure to let your Majesty's eyes behold what no monarch, except King Solomon, ever witnessed," returned Rothschild.

The Czar made no reply, but looked thoughtful and serious. He was reflecting on the cruel wrongs he had inflicted on his Jewish subjects. At the close of the banquet, he turned to inform his host that he was pleased to accept the invitation to stay with him over night. Rothschild bowed his respectful acknowledgment.

We need not wonder that hours passed like minutes at the festive board. It was late in the afternoon when the imperial party rose from the table. The Czar was anxious to miss no curiosity in the most sumptuous of human habitations, and the hospitable Hebrew was only too willing to please His Majesty. They proceeded from room to room, from hall to hall, from vault to vault, where enormous hoards of gold and invaluable stones were stored and guarded by gigantic warriors of the Queen, all armed *cap-a-pie*. At last they found themselves under the open skies, but embowered by a wealth of tropic plants and blossoms rarely seen in our latitude.

They advanced into the depths of the

park, and suddenly stood before an arch of flowery glories, prodigious in size, and shaped in imitation of the rainbow. Every tint of the multicolored bow was artistically reproduced, and, lest the cold destroy that marvel of the florist's art, a crystal vault hung over it like a solid firmament, allowing sunshine to warm and beautify the unique creation of genius. Jealousy seized the flinty heart of the Czar. What was the use of being the autocrat of all the Russias, if a Jew dared boast possession of what he could not dream of enjoying? A sigh escaped his envious breast, as he asked in a cheerless tone :

"And what is the object of this display of plants, Monsieur le Baron?"

"We call it our symbolic gate, Sire," replied the millionaire.

"Symbolic of what?" inquired Nicholas, unwilling to be surprised again.

"It is an emblem of the two pathways presented for the choice of humanity, Sire," explained Rothschild.

"Aha, I see, two ways separate, one to

the right and one to the left, both equally wide, but one cheerful and smooth, the other dark and rugged. Which is preferable? Is not this the point?"

"Exactly, Sire; that has been man's question since his creation," agreed the host.


"Very well, as we have the choice, we shall proceed on the smooth pathway," decided Nicholas, and straightway led his suit on the tempting road, running down an inclination of the ground. Rothschild took the other direction, his pathway leading to elevated ground. Before the royal party had advanced a few hundred paces, they had to pass through a subterranean passage, whence they emerged upon the most desolate surroundings they had ever seen in so limited a space. The desolation grew with every step, the road losing itself in a labyrinth of rocks, on which the sun's light appeared to have no influence. Having passed over a dark chasm by means of what looked like a bridge, the company was astonished to see the span disappear the moment the last person stepped on the

other side, thus rendering return by the same pathway impossible. To the right and the left there was a dismal growth of half-withered trees, and almost perpendicular rocks rose to a considerable height, a dark fluid, resembling liquid pitch rather than water, issuing from many a fissure. The hoot of an owl was answered by a chorus of screaming bitterns and squeaking frogs. The Czar took umbrage on discovering that his host was not present. He stopped, looked around, and asked why the Baron was absent. "We seem to be unaccompanied and unguarded," said he impatiently.

"Your Majesty is accompanied, and, in this castle, under the guardianship of the Lord of Israel," came the assurance from the top of a rock.

"And where are you, Monsieur le Baron?" cried the Czar, the situation being one scarcely to the taste of a despot unused to be trifled with.

"I am in Paradise, Sire," was the curious answer of the famous banker.



"And where the devil are we?" was the next question of His Majesty the Czar.

"In hell, Sire," came the laconic reply, to the surprise of the Czar and his attendants.

"Here is a Hebrew who appears to own all worth having on earth and Paradise besides," remarked the monarch good-humoredly. Turning his look upward, he called out, taking up the Baron's pleasantry: "And will you not raise us out of this infernal region, Monsieur?"

The answer was: "Immediately."

On four golden chains, down came a chariot of crystal and jewels to lift the Czar and his train to the paradisiacal height. It was a plateau as beautiful as the valley of Sharon, shaded by trees loaded with the most odoriferous fruits and blossoms. Nicholas understood the lesson, for he deliberately observed:

"Like a true brother of Christ you saved us from perdition, Monsieur le Baron."

"We wait for the world's appreciation, Sire," said Rothschild in a voice full of meaning.

"Your symbolic gate has taught us a lesson," added the Czar.

"Only a hint at Israel's history, his martyrdom, his mission, and his final triumph. Without Sinai and Carmel, without Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and the Maccabees, what were the hope, life, and dream of the human race?" asked the Hebrew.

"It is clear," continued the monarch pensively. "On a thorny pathway the Jew ascended the mount of salvation, drawing up with him the non-Jewish world. His remains the glory of having given us a Redeemer, apostles, and a Bible. Who has done the like? Who half as much? Why, Monsieur le Baron, it must inspire a feeling of great pride to have rendered mankind such invaluable services. If I were not the Czar, I should like to be a Hebrew, one like yourself."

Rothschild bowed deep, and in a tone of suppressed emotion asked: "And how does the world requite us for the work your Majesty has so graciously referred to?"

"The world is not good," returned the

Czar, his eyes fixed on the crimsoned west, where the descent of the sun was marked by a trail of waning coruscations. "Yes, the world ought to be a vast deal better with Moses and Jesus as our divine guides."

"It is in your Majesty's power to make it better," suggested Rothschild.

"Too late, too late to begin a new course," said Nicholas, as though to himself. "The Jew will remain a Jew to the end of time. What he teaches must be immutable, or it would have changed. Everything suffers change; only the Jew remains the same. His is the threefold blessing: historical preservation, divine revelation, and prophetic inspiration. The Lord knows best what is good for this world. The Hebrew worshipped the Supreme Being thousands of years before our ancestors had a glimpse of the divine truth. We shall hereafter let the Jew worship after his fashion, Monsieur le Baron, sorry though we are to see him reject the Messiah."

"The Lord will bless your Majesty," gratefully said the Hebrew host.

The palace and the gardens were beautifully illumined, night having set in, and the evening was spent in viewing a variety of exhibitions given for the diversion of His Majesty. It was almost midnight when the Czar signified his intention of withdrawing to his apartments.

"We have instructed our guards to give Monsieur le Baron access to our retreat this night," said the Czar on his way to his bedroom.

"It is then your Majesty's pleasure to have the vision?" asked the host.

"Ah, then it is no more than a vision that we are to be regaled with? We counted on something more than a dream," observed the Czar, seemingly disappointed.

"It will be more, Sire; neither will the guards stand between us at the time of the meeting," added Rothschild significantly.

"Unless we meet disembodied, no creature of flesh can approach our person without giving the proper sign, if permission has not previously been granted," asserted the Czar.

"Your Majesty having signified it to be

your pleasure to be met, no earthly power can prevent the meeting," replied the host positively.

"Of this we shall have proof during the coming night," said the Czar, and, with a nod to the Baron, retired, having given strict orders to admit not a soul to his apartments.

When the clock struck twelve there was perfect quiet in the castle. Useless to dwell on the sumptuousness of the Czar's apartment. It was the very copy of the one occupied by King Solomon in his glory. Nicholas thought it a dream. The high canopy of the bed was a miniature imitation of the starry dome, scintillating jewels representing the constellations of the firmament. The tapestries on the walls showed landscapes so wonderfully realistic that they appeared miles away. The illusion was rendered perfect by the ringing of a cow-bell, the playing of a lute, and the carol of a lark. "This is an enchanted castle, and the Jew is a mate of the devil," cried the Czar.

"A mate of the devil," echoed a tenfold voice. Nicholas, startled by the hollow echo, made the sign of the cross. He went to open a window, but there was none. How was the apartment ventilated? Neither was a lamp to be seen, yet the room was brilliantly lighted, the jewels throwing out a flood of radiance.

Tired though the Czar was, he hesitated to stretch his royal limbs on the dazzling couch. When he had gathered courage enough to measure his length on the regal bed, he was astonished at the effect of his horizontal position. His weight caused harmony to proceed from beneath his pillows, as sweet as the spiritual music of another world.

Now the clock struck one. What was it? A mysterious tremor made the whole space quiver. Was the castle rising or sinking? Certainly the room was moving. Whither? The Czar rose to his feet. Adown everything went, and with speed suggestive of considerable depth. A light jerk informed the imperial guest that a station

had been reached. A rap at the door without was answered from within. Rothschild's voice reassured His Majesty that everything was as it should be. The door opened, not into the pompous hall of the palace, but into a cavernous hollow, dimly lighted by a lantern in the Hebrew's hand. Invited to step into the deep, the Czar asked whether the room would not fly up the moment he stepped out of it. Assured that there was no danger, the guest followed his host through an irregular arch, and entered a grotto of vast dimensions, shrouded in total darkness. Presently Rothschild caused the light in his hand to fall on a massive door of steel, which bore four Hebrew letters graven in the metal. The Czar learnt that the letters spelt the ineffable Name, which the high priest wore on his headgear, and before which Alexander the Great had bowed with reverence. Yielding to the touch of the guide, the ponderous door opened, showing a brilliant model of the Holy Ark made of hammered gold. Nicholas inclined his head reverently, but he was not

permitted to view its contents. To the left, suspended on a golden peg, hung the Urim and the Thummim, the oracular symbols the high priest wore on his breast. With them Rothschild adorned his chest. To the right of the Ark stood an antique vase filled with invaluable gems of great beauty. Rothschild picked out a ring, slipped it on his index finger, closed the door, and put out the lamp.

"The glow of this ring fulfils the function of a thousand lamps," observed Nicholas, his envious eye resting on the blazing seal.

"Solomon's signet can do more than illuminate a rayless cavern, Sire," replied the Baron.

The Czar stood mute with amazement; he knew the virtue of the ancient monarch's signet ring, and strained his eyes to discern the contents of the numerous recesses, which, he suspected, contained startling revelations. The grotto was a labyrinth too vast to be the work of human hands. Its great height could scarcely be reached by the eye, and it was hung with solid

crystals of glittering magnificence. The uneven floor was a bewilderingly variegated mosaic of marble and onyx, suggesting a superhuman master hand, which must have been active for ages unnumbered in forming the incrustated pattern of indescribable beauty, broken here and there by petrified trees and shrubs, which sparkled as though set with multicolored jewels. The impression of awe was deepened by the presence of a dazzling altar adorned with irregular columns branching into fantastic candelabra, adding greater beauty to a place already fit for the ministrations of a high priest.

"Let us ascend this altar," proposed the host to the Czar. The hundredfold reverberation of these words startled the Emperor. Could those hollow noises be no more than a mocking echo?

From his stand upon the altar, Rothschild commanded a full view of all the dark recesses. Toward the first of these he turned the beam of the glowing signet. An outburst of mellow splendor from within re-

sponded to the flash of the supernatural ring, revealing a sight of awe and horror. From a dim background, teeming with unsightly shapes of groveling and groping humanity kneeling before a variety of monstrosities, strode forth, like Phœbus from the Orient's golden gate, a comely youth, his back turned on the gruesome scene, his eyes, full of ethereal inspiration, cast heavenward. A gigantic savage, club in hand, threw grim eyes at him, and a gleam from the deep empyrean gilded the countenance of the dreamy demi-god. The sight was pregnant with sublime significance. The Czar looked to his guide for an explanation. Without a word, Rothschild turned his light on the next recess. Here the youth stood in matured manhood, looking thoughtfully on a barren tract before him, in his rear a numerous train, and behind them a chaos of shattered idols and broken altars amidst a confused mass of frowning humanity. "Abraham?" whispered the Czar. "Abraham," reverberated every recess.

"The head of the Hebrew nobility, Sire;

the man who preceded the son of Amram in his world-redeeming mission; the one we call our great-grandsire. The world has never been graced by a diviner specimen of humanity. To him our letters of nobility date back," was the undisputed claim of the proud Hebrew, who at the same time gave illumination to the adjoining recess.

Pyramids on the banks of a mighty stream indicated the land of the Nile. Wretched slaves were engaged in hard labor, task-masters, rod in hand, inflicted punishment on some, and others were casting furtive looks at a new-born babe with head encircled by a nimbus. Nicholas asked: "Israel in Egypt?"

"Israel in Egypt, Sire, and here the Exodus," answered Rothschild, flooding another region of the cavern with a blaze of light. The scene presented a great multitude of men, women, and children, headed by a mighty leader, staff in hand, before them a pillar of fire, and farther on a stormy sea. "Sinai comes next," surmised the Czar.

"There is Sinai, Sire," cried Rothschild,

lighting up a panorama of overpowering reality. "Yonder your Majesty may discern Horeb wrapped in flame, at the summit a majestic figure, clad in fire like a god—our lawgiver, the tablets in his hand. The effluence issuing therefrom throws streaks of light on the faces of the alarmed masses, and breaks the darkness far beyond, suggesting the power of the *Torah* to enlighten mankind. Israel holds the light of the world. By the impenetrable mystery yonder is conveyed a faint idea of the ineffable Supreme Being, who, in the beginning, bade chaos recede before His light, which enkindled the stars, and set them moving forever. Below, diagonally opposite, your Majesty beholds heathenism symbolized by Jove in despondency. Those three at the thunderer's feet represent Minos, Lycurgus, and Solon, with heads lowered, and unrolled scrolls clutched in their nervous hands. Hebraism triumphs over Hellenism. And here Israel's march through the desert."

With a wave of his hand the guide transformed a dark recess into a vision of glory.

Twelve tribes were seen to advance majestically, the holy Ark of the Covenant occupying the centre of the triumphant procession.

"That was a daring expedition," said the Czar. "They dared and conquered. Their faith must have been great."

"Unbounded, Sire, then as thereafter and hitherto. Yet our forty years in the desert have been the most heroic and blessed ever lived through by a people. With Moses as leader, the destruction of idolatry and the fashioning of the divinest code as exclusive employments, and heavenly manna as food, what a glorious period!" cried Rothschild.

"And after the desert the Land of Promise," assumed Nicholas in a positive tone.

"Zion, Sire," responded the lord of the grotto, sending a volume of light in the direction of a great city, clustered round a superb edifice of symmetrical beauty. A striking figure was a majestic woman of queenly grace, one of whose hands rested on a cornice of the portico, the other on the head of a person whose contemplative look and whose

garments indicated the calling of the prophet. Around the harvest festival was being celebrated, happy throngs crowding the courts and the neighborhood of the sacred building, many with green laurel crowns on their heads, in their hands baskets filled with sheaves of golden grain or with clusters of the luscious grape. Headed by the high priest, a train of priests and Levites, attired for the sacred office, were on the point of entering the Sanctuary.

“Beautiful Zion!” exclaimed the Czar.

“And here her first great sorrow,” supplemented the guide, throwing light upon a scene of wreckage and desolation. The city and the Temple were seen in flames; Asiatic cohorts reveled within the precincts of the sacred edifice, tearing down whatever would not yield to the fire. Far away, chained and guarded, the daughter of Zion was seen being led off into captivity, accompanied by the prophet, his hand pointing heavenward. The meaning was clear, and was further illustrated by the next scene, Israel in captivity, crowding the highways which passed

by a stream, harps hanging on the willows.

"Your story is unsurpassed in stirring incidents by the tale of Troy," said Nicholas with great earnestness.

"Sire, our tale is either epos, or ode, or tragedy," returned the guide. "There, Zion's daughter in a new situation," added Rothschild, as he caused another scene to burst forth in luminous grandeur.

An altered Temple, environed by an altered Jerusalem, showed a new state of things. The Roman ensign and files of legionaries told their own story. The emblematic figure was there in her original posture, but her features were affected by a twitch of nervous impatience. The expression was intensified by the sight of the man of God near her, who, rod in hand, was on the point of chastising a wayward boy. The deeper significance of the tableau was brought home by the presence of a Roman magistrate, whose eyes were riveted on this group, while his finger pointed to a rood in the distance. Angry Hebrews threw threatening glances at the unruly child in the

hands of the priest. The foreshadowed issue caused the Czar to exclaim: "They are going to crucify our Saviour."

"Sire, not they; the Romans are going to crucify him; the Romans were his executioners. The Jews are themselves going to be crucified, a nation of martyrs, for eighteen hundred years," returned the guide, furnishing the illustration to his words by breaking the night in another recess at the extreme end of the grotto.

Once more Zion was in conflagration; the Temple stood a dismal ruin. The vast desolation was rendered ghastly by the slain and the dying Judeans. Roman legions made havoc among the ill-fated sons of Judah. Again the daughter of Zion was seen as she was carried off, this time chained to a Roman chariot.

"We should have liked to see Judea prevail in her final struggle for spiritual supremacy," graciously observed the Czar, evidently moved by the tragic scene.

"Judea did prevail, Sire, prevails to this day," asserted Rothschild, pointing to an-

other brilliant display conjured up from dense darkness. "There, the rule of the black monk!" cried he.

"The rule of the black monk," echoed every hollow of the labyrinthian cave.

A monk, the personification of an irreconcilable Church, had one of his feet on the Roman eagle, the other on the neck of the magistrate. His eyes were fixed in fierce hatred on the daughter of Zion, robed in mourning, and his hands grasped a red cross. In the background, separated from the daughter of Zion, dressed in sackcloth and overshadowed by the emblem of the new religion, stood the exiled Jew, holding the *Torah* in his embrace. "This needs no explanation, Sire," suggested the host.

"It needs none, Monsieur le Baron," agreed His Majesty, looking for the coming scene.

"Neither does this historic reality need interpretation," observed the millionaire.

The display called forth from night by the power of the signet was an infernal spectacle of outrage and carnage under a lurid sky. The Czar shuddered at the

sight of fiendish atrocities perpetrated on men, women, and children of Jewish features. In the inhuman revels of cruelty and bloodshed, the black monk played the most prominent part; but there were others whose vandalism caused the Czar to blush for shame. Among the barbarians that tore away children from the breasts of their mothers, he recognized the instruments of his own despotism. They were his Russians who did the dark deeds. He realized what this implied. He had brought untold misery to a myriad Jewish homes by robbing them of their children to baptize them in the army. The lesson came home to him forcibly, that his place in history was fixed.

"Is there anything else to be seen, Monsieur le Baron?" inquired the monarch, evidently anxious to have the scenes shifted.

"The brightest is yonder, Sire," replied the banker, turning the signet toward a deep recess and transforming it into a Messianic vision. "It is the passing of man from darkness to light."

The startling tableau was one of trans-

parent shades broken by a tremulous dawn, an indefinable transition from night to day. Only half revealed, the emblem of Christianity was seen in the background, and the fierceness of the black monk was relenting in face of the imposing presence of a thoughtful power surrounded by all the instruments of modern research and science. On the brighter side of the picture, holding the *Torah* in his arms, stood the Jew, unbending, but placid, sorrowful, but unvengeful. Partial reconciliation was indicated by the friendly intercourse of the votaries of different denominations originally hostile to one another.

"And do the Jews wait for the realization of that dream?" asked the Czar.

"Yea, Sire, and for much more, as soon as humanized humanity grasps the prophetic ideal, which is to make earth like heaven by reuniting the divided race. Here is the culmination of Israel's Utopia."

The display brought to light by the power in Rothschild's hand was the grandest and most overpowering yet seen by the Czar.

It was the dreamed-of Messianic time. After his royal guest had earnestly contemplated the glories in sight, Rothschild satisfied his unspoken inquiry by volunteering the brief explanation: "Love, justice, and universal brotherhood, heavenly peace, Sire; what else has this world been created for?"

The panorama showed a blessed hemisphere bathed in golden radiance, as beautiful as Eden, with Horeb outshining all the splendors of the revealed regions. The peak of the mountain appeared the focus of the sun's effulgence, reflecting prodigious beams on great numbers of the race, who turned longing eyes toward the centre of universal enlightenment. At the foot of the blazing height stood the exile of Zion, robed in priestly attire, holding the *Torah* in his embrace, hand in hand with the monk, he, too, all transformed, and arrayed in the white garments of sacred ministration.

"When that comes to pass, there will be no Czars in Russia," whispered Nicholas, overcome by the Messianic suggestions of the grandiose spectacle.

"There will be neither boundaries nor ranks and titles to divide the children of man, Sire," said the Baron with great earnestness.

"We do not appear to draw near it, Monsieur le Baron," observed the Czar.

"That is why we Jews expect the Messiah, your Majesty," explained Rothschild.

"No, no! The Messiah has come; he has come that taught us to live heavenly lives. Let man be blamed for living like a beast," asserted the Czar in a soft voice.

"Yea, Sire, let that man, whoever he may be, who misuses the power vested in him for benign rule to multiply the woes of the race be blamed," supplemented the host pointedly.

But the Czar did not appear to notice the last words, his eyes being riveted on the signet Rothschild wore, as though an inexpressible longing had seized him to possess it.

"If we touched this seal of Solomon, would the marvels repeat themselves by the virtue vested therein?" questioned the Czar.

Taking the hint, Rothschild begged permission to put the signet-ring on the finger of his imperial guest. Nicholas felt a cold shiver run through his veins, and the dim recesses of the grotto seemed to realize the transfer of the invaluable jewel. For no sooner was the ring on the Emperor's hand, than the cavern seemed to resent the profanation of the magic jewel. A shaking, as from a light earthquake, was accompanied by an instantaneous vibration of air, reminding the Czar of the atmospheric disturbance caused by the distant discharge of artillery. A faint, multitudinous echo, such as one sometimes hears coming from a glen or a hollow, startled the imperial guest. In a trice the echo swelled into the uproar of a battling army. The grotto widened enormously, each recess subsiding and yielding up its contents, not as lifeless groups, but in a state of feverish activity. It was no more a cave, but a vast plain under a clouded sky, teeming with bristling battalions, and ringing with the furious cries, groans, and curses of battling races. Cycles of stirring

history unfolded their fearful tale before the gaze of the amazed Nicholas, who stood horrified at the woes man wrought for his kind. Presently his Russians rushed into the arena of slaughter, hyenas in human form. Helpless throngs were murdered, devilish crimes perpetrated, and curses mixed with the Czar's name convulsed the atmosphere. Suddenly the chaos subsided, the air cleared, and the two spectators saw themselves in the heart of a great city.

"St. Petersburg!" exclaimed Nicholas. Yes, it was St. Petersburg. The brilliant files of the Czar's body-guard lined the street, restricting the masses of humanity to the sidewalks. Muffled drums and wailing trumpets sounded a funeral march, to the rhythm of which a black cortege progressed slowly toward a draped cathedral. The Czar's hair stood on end. As the magnificent catafalque drawn by twelve black horses passed the elevation whereon he and Rothschild stood, he beheld himself in the coffin, his sword broken, his face yellow, and his crown tarnished. Without

uttering a sound, the Czar sank under his own weight, and lost all consciousness of his surroundings.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself in the royal bed and under the scintillating canopy. Instead of by the lark's song, he was greeted by the hooting of an owl. He left the castle as soon as possible, without so much as bidding his host adieu.


THE LEGEND OF THE TEN LOST TRIBES

THE *Maggid* is the itinerant preacher whose homilies furnish the impetus for periodical revivals in Slavonic Jewry. The names of famous *Maggidim*, as for instance that of the *Maggid* of Dubno, are reverently transmitted from age to age, and their inspired utterances are treasured like those of prophecy. What a great *Maggid* does not know of sacred, particularly Midrashic lore, is not held to be worth knowing. The arrival of a *Maggid* at a Jewish centre of population is an event equalled only by the coming of a celebrated *Chazan*, and the coincident arrival of both creates great excitement. There are instances on record when *Maggid* and *Chazan* exhausted their resources in the attempt to excel each other in the impression they produce on the masses, who gather to be edified by their speech and song. Like the *Chazan*, the

Maggid arrives unheralded, yea, uninvited; like him, he is welcomed everywhere, especially if fame precedes him, as is the case with most *Maggidim* that deserve the name they bear. Mediocrity forces the *Chazan* and the *Maggid* to look for other callings.

The *Maggid* is a power for good. Black-haired, long-bearded, two shining curls descending from his temples to a line with the lower jaw, a high forehead, noble, earnest features, frequently relieved by a tinge of good humor, he as a rule possesses an imposing presence, which is further dignified by a long, flowing robe of satin or atlas, and is crowned by a towering cap of sable.

The genuine *Maggid* bears himself majestically, and suits his actions to his carriage. In his individuality there is a combination of the dignity of the judge, the intense enthusiasm of the prophet, the solemn demeanor of the tragedian, the imagination and fire of the poet, and the ready wit of the comedian. What he brands as wickedness, men are deterred from doing. His apostrophes addressed to virtue are divine;



his verbal pictures of the torments of Gehinnom are blood-curdling, and his descriptions of the delights of Gan-Eden, or Paradise, are Dantesque. His study is human nature, and he never ascends the pulpit before he is well informed on local affairs, and woe betide him who, being rich, indulges in meanness, or, being strong, revels in abuse of the weak. The death-bed, the bier, the terrific angel who pays the first call to the buried, the Throne of Judgment, hell-fire, brimstone, pools of boiling pitch, all the horrors of Abaddon, are conjured up and depicted with such realistic vividness as to chill the audience to the very marrow.

The *Maggid* knows neither fear nor the desire to please; he has a message and a mission, and he acquits himself of his self-imposed duty in a manner that would do honor to an Elijah. He is listened to with bated breath for hours; his voice continues to ring in every ear for weeks after he is gone; his notes and gestures are imitated by such as possess the ability to do so; his exhortations are on every lip, and his meta-

phors, similes, and illustrations become household quotations, passing from parent to child, from one town to the other. Stern as the average *Maggid* appears, his quiver is filled with the withering shafts of ridicule, and his wit and humor are acknowledged with smiles of delight, sometimes with peals of laughter.

In familiar intercourse the *Maggid* is an excellent companion, knows and sings the newest tunes of the best *Chazanim*, amuses the people by recounting a hundred funny incidents, which he has experienced on his travels, and, what is most highly valued, has an inexhaustible repertory of stories to draw upon for the edification of his friends.

Such a *Maggid* was Menahem of Odessa. Of the many legends circulated in his name, those about the Ten Lost Tribes and the B'nai Mosheh may serve as samples. They have often been told and retold, and here they shall be set down substantially as they have been translated from the jargon, or *Yiddish Deutsch*, in which they are extant in manuscript:

"In my early childhood I was very fond of listening to thrilling tales, and close attention enabled me to acquire local reputation as a consummate story-teller, so that my school-mates regaled me with a portion of their luncheon in exchange for the stories I evolved from a retentive memory, and embellished by a fertile imagination. As I was naturally impressionable, the tales I heard reproduced themselves in an incoherent chain of dreams. These I told to my parents, who listened to me with silent wonder, especially my mother, who was a very pious woman, and believed that dreams come from God, and are breathed by angels into the ears of infancy, which accounts for the sweet smiles so often seen on the faces of infants while asleep. The angels commune with the immaculate souls of babes, reveal mysteries and transcendent scenes in the valleys of Eden to them, and the smiles are the expressions of felicity. To my childish imagination those tales and dreams were as real as reality. To this moment, while preaching to crowded synagogues and wan-

dering from city to city, I am under the impression that invisible powers watch over me, put fire into my soul, and teach me what I am to say in the name of truth and righteousness. In fact, I have of late been affected by the illusion that I am in dream-land, surrounded by a multitude of phantoms, and I entertain the hope that I shall one day awaken to find that what I so long believed to be my real existence was but a fitful hallucination. Who can prove that death is not an exit from the phantom-play called life?

“Another conclusion of mine, which would fairly account for the universal madness here, where intelligent beings sacrifice their bliss of soul to the gross pleasures of the body, is that earth is one of the remote spheres, set apart by the Supreme Ruler for the sojourn of erratic spirits; greed, vice, wickedness, murder, and war being sure symptoms of insanity. A myriad men and women are daily delivered to the grave; everyone sees and knows that this is the end; yet everyone goes home, takes dinner,

and toils for the next meal. The few sane men who have blessed the world with their presence are the thinkers, the prophets, and the poets, the great dreamers that outlive and outshine the colossal bipeds mis-called the great. The grandest dream on record is that of Jacob's ladder. It connects heaven and earth, and is the symbol of Israel's mission. The ascent and descent of angels signifies the eternal circulation of matter and spirit. If you hope to rise heavenward, you must leave matter behind. Jacob's offspring are to spread on this earth and to teach man how to ascend that ladder. Whatever member of the human race is idealized, whatever soul is etherealized, wears the garland woven of the prophet's and the poet's dreams. I take this universe to be the realization of a supernal dream. God dreamed, and there was light and life, a billion hosts of angels, and countless myriads of constellations, and galaxies of fiery orbs.

"I may assert that I have seen, learned, and heard many unaccountable things in

this life. In Constantinople, the wonderful city of cities, I passed the most profitable years of my youth. The Caliph forces nobody to believe what he believes; all creeds and nationalities are tolerated. Thus unoppressed, our brethren there are far in advance of the Turk in knowledge, and fill offices of trust in the imperial government. Happily I was among those of the rising generation whose parents thought less of worldly than of intellectual distinction. My teachers were the best, and I early found Jewish history to have a resistless fascination for me. I discovered in it tragic grandeur excelled nowhere in prose or in poetry. How anyone could study our Scriptures and read our history without reverence, was to me incomprehensible. The epic of humanity centres in the career of Israel. With Moses as the sky-bearing Atlas, Judah's triumph should suffer no fluctuation. But how explain the untold woes of Jacob's progeny? Why do other tribes multiply and ramify, until continents are filled with their ever-growing numbers,

while we are to-day numerically the same as in the times of David?

"The answer my teacher gave me was: We have lost ten of our tribes, besides the vast multitude of the B'nai Mosheh, of whom history is silent. What a loss, if irretrievable! Where can the lost tribes be? And where the B'nai Mosheh? Surely they are somewhere, I concluded, and thenceforth my sole wish and thought was to discover a clue that would enable me to solve the problem of our history. Instead of the small fraction we now are among the nations of earth, we should rise to be a power of over one hundred millions. Our position would be strong and commanding enough for us to reclaim our heritage and rebuild the Sanctuary of Zion. My soul was fired by the idea, and I could not rid myself of the belief that it was my destiny to reunite the scattered sheep of ancient Israel and Judah.

"My father objected to the chimera, as he termed it, seeing that it possessed all my being to the exclusion of every other thought, but my mind was inflamed, inaccessible to

reason, though sensitive to ridicule, to both of which my father resorted in vain. Whatever literature I could procure in reference to the subject close to my heart, I devoured with avidity, but there was no clue to the mystery in any of the works I read. Some authors assumed the English, others the Japanese, to be the descendants of the Lost Tribes. None contained an allusion to the B'nai Mosheh, who, according to the Word of God, were to be as numerous as Israel.

"That the world knew nothing of them did not, in my judgment, preclude the possibility of their flourishing in some unapproachable region. A time came for America to be discovered; who could say that the time had not come for the lost of our race to be restored to us? The thought that the solution of this problem was to be the glory of my life ripened into a certainty within me.

"One afternoon, as the shadow of things lengthened in the mellow light of declining day, while out for a walk in the suburbs of Estamboul, I was stopped by a person of at

least five times my age and of weird appearance. He was a man known as the 'silent mystic;' was regarded with awe by those who knew of his holy nature, and was often received reverently at our home, for he was poor, and depended for the scant food he needed on the bounty of open hands. His figure was tall and lean; his look deep and sombre; his eyes shone mysteriously from hollow sockets; his jaw was strikingly pointed, his face fearfully wrinkled, and his hands as bony and dry as the talons of a bird. The man looked like a skeleton covered with yellow parchment. Silently he laid his right hand on my head, looked into my eyes, and appeared to read the secret of my soul. An unearthly illumination shed a passing glow on his sallow countenance, his lips moved as if in prayer, but no sound was heard.

"Suddenly he turned around, drawing me resistlessly after him. I followed unalarmed, knowing him to be a holy man, who broke his fast but once a week, on the eve of the Sabbath. The mystic was winged with

speed, advancing at a rate totally unproportioned to his strength, and he held me under an influence that bore me along like a thing without will. Up-hill, down-hill, through valley, forest, meadow, glen, and field, across rivers and swamps, he drew me onward, never looking behind him, but sweeping onward, onward, as though space were naught, and the law of gravitation had ceased to operate, until the skies grew dim, and twilight merged into thickening night, when, passing through a valley between two piles of jet-black rock, he stood before a dismal cave, illumined by a single wax taper, which magnified our shadows prodigiously.

“Here he turned round to look at me, and I perceived an astonishing change in his features. He was another man. Behind the unsightly mask had been hidden a figure of symmetrical beauty and manly vigor. The marvelous transformation extended to the ring of his voice. A genial smile illumined his face, as he said :

“‘Thy wish, my son, shall in part be fulfilled; thou shalt behold the Ten Lost Tribes.

and be among the blessed children of our immortal master, Moses. In this hollow of the dark mountains thou art bidden to fast with me seventy moons, breaking thy fast every Sabbath eve on the food the Lord will provide. Never let a profane word pass thy lip, nor think of aught unholy, but ponder on the work I shall place in thy hand. Do as I prompt thee, and let thy faith be perfect. Thy reward will be the revelation of the Holiest Name, first revealed to Adam in Eden, who passed it on to the patriarchs. From them it came down to the good men that led Israel before the fall of Zion, after which it was lost to us. By virtue of that Name the son of Amram performed his great wonders. Entrusted to Aaron, the Name passed from high priest to high priest, to be uttered on the Day of Atonement in the Holy of Holies. By the might vested in that Name, Joshua stopped the career of the sun, Elijah called down fire from heaven, and brought the dead to life, and prophets pierced the veil of futurity. You shall hear more thereof in the Isle of the Elect.'

“On hearing this, I reverently took my seat at the feet of the holy man, who handed me a volume full of mystic lore, containing a long list of mysterious names of high spirits in the skies. Therein I read, and reading mused, and wondrous trances and dreams came over me, and my soul soared in a haze of weird visions. I held the work God had given Adam in Paradise that he might understand the secrets of creation, and in my meditations past and present were forgotten. All the wants of the body were subdued by the thirst of the soul to penetrate the deep purport of Kabbalistic revelations.

“And so days and nights passed like hours, weeks glided by like days, and the moons and the seasons came and went, and when the period of my probation drew to a close, a great vision broke on me. The heavens opened, and the Great Name was legibly written in the stars of the empyrean, the universe all the while blazing with fiery constellations and hosts of seraphim.

“I rose in the morning with new strength

in my arms, a mighty impulse in my heart, and a power in my eyes that enabled me to see things in a light hitherto unknown to me. The darkness seemed bright, the desert beautiful, and the skies deeper and sweeter than ever before.

“‘Thou hast the Ineffable Name graven in thy memory; wherefore go whithersoever thy heart leadeth thee, and have thy wish fulfilled,’ whispered the mystic.

“As one soaring on eagle’s wings, off I hurried, instinct with superhuman vigor. My heart drew me southward. Soon the mountains vanished in the rear, and before me spread a sunny vast of earth and sky with all the glories of a blessed May. My pathway ran along a placid stream, meandering through tropic luxuriance of mead and grove and discharging its crystal tide into an ocean, calm and blue as azure.

“Before the waters of the unruffled sea I stood alone, knowing my goal to be far beyond the deep. How traverse the abyss? ‘Spread thy mantle on the wave,’ whispered a voice within me. And, acting on this im-

pulse, I embarked on my garment, which stiffened into a boat, the centre yielding and the edges rising. A new-born breeze propelled me lightly farther and farther away from the shore, until there was naught in sight save sky and water and myself between. Undismayed I looked toward the South, the Great Name burning in my memory.

“As though to try my faith, a gale came bursting from the North, driving the thick threatening clouds that hung in the horizon and upheaving mountainous billows. I stood unaffected, fearless as the sea-gull. And when the darkness had subsided, the waves changed into ripples, and I beheld with delight a range of white mountains, which, washed at their base by transparent waters, towered, like enormous icebergs, into the very deep of the blue heavens. I drifted gently toward the nearest landing point, and set foot on a shore of soft breezes, saturated with delicious odors.

“At first the region appeared deserted by life and inhospitable; but farther in spread


a landscape fairer and stranger than the strangest things the eye has ever seen. Either my sight magnified nature's products to gigantic proportions, or the world I had left behind was a miniature representation of what I beheld here in towering glory.

"Pleasant drowsiness stole over me, coupled with a thirst that forced me to look for a cooling drink. A bubbling spring near by, under a tree of a magnitude seen nowhere else, furnished the longed-for draught. Then, yielding to an overpowering somnolence, I dreamed dreams the sweetest I have ever had, so that, on opening my eyes, I was sorry to find that the sun had risen.

"Nothing within sight indicated ordinary life, except a number of star-dotted birds, sparkling in the bushy foliage of the tree that gave me shelter and ease. The turf was softer than moss, free from decayed roots and blades, and emitted an aroma that affected the senses like nepenthe. I should have continued to yield to slumber, which weighed down my eyelids, had it not


been for the discomfort caused me by my garments. Everything about my body tightened, especially my shoes, which threatened to burst on my feet. Something was going on with my physical frame, for on removing my shoes I found them to be much smaller than the feet they had encased, and the rounded shape of my hands left no doubt that I was undergoing an unaccountable process of bodily expansion and renovation. My limbs looked not unlike those of a giant baby, fresh, tender, transparent, and beautiful, and I could not help laughing at sight of my dimpled hands and rosy infant face. The sound of my voice startled me. I could hardly believe my ears. The succession of notes vibrated through the air like song, voice and echo melting into sweet harmony.

"Anon sweeter music than human voice could produce diverted my attention. Feathered musicians burst forth into such rapturous strains as man never heard in field or grove. Rapt with delight, I listened, listened, and dreamed of things dear, mysterious, and holy.



"Once more sleep took me in its soft embrace. When I opened my eyes, it was about noontide. A huge lion, his tufted tail raised, was sniffing around me. All fear deserted me. The royal animal licked my hands, and playfully purred around me like a gentle kitten. I fondled it with great pleasure. By various expressions of its wish the noble brute induced me to mount it, and carried me in less time than it takes to tell to a shaded brooklet, landing me in the midst of a flock of snow-white sheep as large as heifers. Happy land of Messianic peace! Whoever they be that dwell here, their Messiah has come indeed! was my natural thought.

"Half lost in reverie, yet conscious of my wondrous surroundings, I set out to penetrate to the interior of the fairy land. As I stopped at a limpid fountain to quench my thirst, I recoiled astonished from my own reflection therein. If that was my likeness—and how could I doubt it?—there was little left of my previous self. What a stature and complexion were mine!



“Forced to remove my clothes, which molested me, I threw myself into a brook as clear as beryl, and rose from the water renewed in body and soul. Samson, with his locks full grown, could not have been more conscious of his prodigious power than I was of mine. The earth appeared to tremble under my tread. A leap carried me over the brook. Another bound lifted me to the highest point of a stately cedar tree, whence, like a bird, I darted from bough to bough, from tree to tree. Reveling in my acquired strength, I repeated the feat again and again, leaping and bounding and finishing with another plunge in the delicious tide.

“Suddenly I realized that the landscape was sinking under my feet. Soft hoops gently enclosed my frame, and I was soaring in mid-air. Before I had had time to account for my curious experience, I found myself seated on the palm of an outstretched hand belonging to a Titan of most prepossessing physiognomy. We exchanged a look of mutual surprise. But his smile was reassuring. Had he chosen to close his

hand, I should not have been here to tell the tale. Instead, he advanced with a step commensurate with his size, leaving me to infer that he proposed to exhibit me to his fellows.

"It was a thrilling sensation to be thus conveyed through the higher currents of a mysterious atmosphere in the hand of a mysterious being. I felt like one placed on a walking tower viewing the glories of a vast horizon.

"As I had anticipated, several of his kind, beautiful Cyclopean shapes of God's perfect workmanship, issuing from pyramidal bowers, responded to his call. No intrusive inquisitiveness, only calm wonder, marked their speech and manner, gentle as the air they inhaled. Their language was Hebrew, spoken as melodiously as when David sang his sacred odes to the Almighty, and in this tongue I answered their questions.

"Such were the first representatives I met of the Ten Lost Tribes, who inhabit the outskirts of nether Eden.

"How had they reached these blessed

regions? Driven from the Land of Promise by grim oppressors, and full of faith that Israel's God never forsakes the righteous, they had prayed for deliverance, and had had a vision that their petition was granted. Elijah had appeared at three different places, each time pointing to the South as the seat of salvation. The Elders had taken the hint, inspired the discouraged myriads with hope, and caused them to embark in thousands of crafts on the southern sea, sure that, as in the case of the B'nai Mosheh ages before, the winds of heaven would carry them to their destination. No sooner did their vessels touch the wave than a breeze propelled the fragile fleet, wafting them for many days under a benignant sky, until they reached nether Eden, now the Isle of the Elect, once boundless Paradise, transplanted bodily after the fall of the first human pair to this region beyond the sea. Gobi, or the Desert of Shamo, marks the place once occupied by the original Eden.

“Undisturbed by sublunary tribulations

the habitants of nether Eden live in the delightful mildness of perpetual spring, cultivate and beautify the soil, and sing hymns to the Bestower of all good. Their dwellings are odoriferous bowers of unfading palm-leaves, intertwined with flowery climbers and a wealth of blossoms, mixed with the luscious grape, each habitation rising like a tower of delicious foliage, flowers, and fruits.

“Eden’s four streams here roll their limpid tides over beds of golden sands, watering meads and vales teeming with paradisiacal wonders. Plenteous nature spares them physical toil. Work with them means diversion and the gratification of an inborn impulse to beautify the beautiful. Necessity begotten of want and all other ills to which man is heir elsewhere, are unknown to them.

“The first pilgrims to land on the border of the blessed Isle died of high age, having brought with them the germ of mortality, and I was permitted to see them in their sepulchres, resting life-like, as though in

suddenness of lightning came a furious blast and an earthquake, with symptoms characteristic of a volcanic eruption. Mingled with the fury of the disturbance was heard blood-freezing howling and wailing, as of souls in torment. My heart was seized with pity, which must have expressed itself on my countenance, for I was calmly informed that the uproar was due to the ascent of the shades doomed to expiate their sins in Shēol, who are released at the approach of the Sabbath, and permitted to rest on the holyday in the outskirts of Eden.

“A chill ran through the marrow of my bones. In the next moment myriads of reprobate ghosts were to be around me, listening to my speech. The commotion, however, lasted but a few minutes. Reassured by the composure of the multitude before me, I regained courage, and it was made clear to me that immortal beings are inaccessible to fear, which is an attribute of mortality. To my question whether Eden and Shēol were in close proximity, the answer was: ‘As Virtue and Vice.’

"As soon as the storm had subsided, things not only resumed their former serenity, but looked lovelier than before, the glories of the Sabbath enhancing the beauties of Eden, and redoubling the spiritual delights of its dwellers. Inspired by the grandiose environments, I began to impart my message, reciting the melancholy tale of our people's interminable woes: how the cycles had rolled on, and Israel was yet homeless, scorned by barbarous nations, hated, defamed, disgraced, yea, oppressed, and outraged, for no other cause than his unswerving loyalty to his God—he, the bearer of Jehovah's banner, the messenger of peace and salvation to all men. Races unworthy of the imperishable gifts of his soul despise him, trample on his manhood, turn his life into a burning desert, a Sahara of hatred and persecution. Yet how faithful he, ever blessing the Holy One, breathing his last in agony, but never betraying his Maker.

"I wound up with a strong appeal to my intensely interested audience to unite in prayer, that a redeemer be sent to deliver

them from a maddened world sunk in sin. My voice trembled with deep emotion, yet rang clear as a silver bell, when I cried :

“ ‘ Shall Zion mourn forever, mankind forever grope in darkness? Where is faith, where reverence, love, virtue, truth? The discomfiture of the Lord’s own people perpetuates the triumph of falsehood, retards the realization of the Prophet’s promised era of universal peace and brotherhood. Help your martyred brethren, O ye favored of Him whom we worship and bless in unison !’

“ The response was a multitudinous roar of pain, and faces hitherto unclouded by earthly cares turned prayerfully toward heaven, their petition swelled by the moaning and weeping of the ghostly reprobates, who thus manifested their sympathy with the living.

“ The voice of one that spoke with authority bade the others remember that the Sabbath was intended to be a day of delight, not of sorrow. I took the hint, and fondly dwelt on the heroic endurance of

our illustrious ancestors and their literary achievements while in dispersion. The change of subject afforded me the opportunity of touching on the deep purport of our traditional lore, and on the unfathomed mysteries hidden in the Kabbala, which had proved impregnable fortresses against our foes from without. Each of our renowned luminaries came in for a share of praise. Our enemies had failed in their efforts to destroy the source of our marvelous vitality; our literature had invariably risen phoenix-like from the ashes, a monument of awe and wonder.


"Yea, Israel suffers, but he lives!" was my last word.

"Henceforth I was the centre of attraction, drawing large numbers around me, who treated me with reverential respect, and waited on me with patriarchal hospitality. Numerous were their questions, which I endeavored to answer to the best of my ability. In return they acquainted me with the great difficulties I should have to overcome in my attempt to penetrate to the central region

of Eden. The only accessible gate was guarded by a prodigious fly-wheel of double-edged flaming swords, shooting lightning, besides twelve raging cataracts, which the tempestuous black river Sambation sends adown in a succession of tremendous falls to protect Eden proper, the seat of the B'nai Mosheh, from the intrusion of the inhabitants outside.

“Never had any one of the Ten Tribes been permitted to see the luminous offspring of the deathless lawgiver, the barriers being impassable. My determination to encounter the dangerous elements and my hope to traverse the fearful Sambation, they could not comprehend, and besought me to desist from attempting the hitherto unattempted, until I explained the omnipotent virtue of the Great Name burning in my memory, no power in the Universe being able to resist it. They had no doubt that the Ineffable Name was known to those beyond the Sambation.

“Time leaves no trace on these unfading children of an eternal spring. Like the green



and the flowers about them, they continue ever young and lovely, rising each morning to begin a series of pastimes, bathing in rejuvenating waters, worshipping, loving, dancing, and crowning each other with garlands culled in evergreen meadows by the hands of maidens lovelier than the goddess of grace. Sin, fear, greed, temptation, jealousy, and retribution are things they conceive of as we do of a disembodied state of being. So utterly innocent did I find them of human ills that it taxed my ingenuity to make the sorrows of mortality clear to them. Nor was it easy for them to imagine a pure motive in a being that causes affliction or pain to another, unless it be an inspiration from the powers of evil.

“Beautiful as I had found the Tribes at my arrival, the Sabbath atmosphere threw a halo of additional lustre around each head, transforming the male beings into demigods, the female beings into enchanting cherubim. And when, obeying the signal of a leader, they uttered adoration in choral song, my tears flowed profusely, for my

heart yearned to bide forever with the Elect. The song was one of the Davidic odes once sung in the Sanctuary of Zion. O, for the time when God dwelt visible among His people, and earth and heaven were linked by the golden chain of heartfelt prayer !

“The transcendent holy day was departing, leaving only a trail of radiance in the crimsoned West, when the loveliness of nature began to be obscured by an atmospheric disturbance similar to that which had preceded the Sabbath. In other quarters it would have scared animate creation into hiding-places to escape the fury of the elements. Here, however, not the least perturbation of spirit was betrayed, although the uproarious storm broke out with a vehemence threatening to uproot every tree. I was told to watch things undisturbed, and was assured that the outburst implied no danger whatever for beings beyond the reach of Shēol. The tempest, like the first, was of short duration. Doleful wailing mingled with the howling winds ; the darkness grew dense, and the noises were

hideous. Thunder and lightning rent the firmament, and shook the rockbed of Eden. Amidst the confusion and the lamentations was heard the heart-chilling call: 'Return, ye wicked, to Shëol!' This cry was the signal for a terrific convulsion of the earth and air. The call was repeated with intensified emphasis. My heart stood still. The mysterious voice rang like the trump of doom. 'Return, ye wicked, to Shëol!'

"Like the far-off flapping of the wings of myriad pelagic birds passing over the sailor's head in the dead of night, was the sound of the ghosts moving off with hollow moaning toward the black Sambation, in obedience to the third call. Long the piteous notes vibrated in my ears. Darkness departed, and the firmament revealed the magic evening star. Thus was the reward of virtue contrasted with the punishment of wickedness.

"Those who answered my questions professed to know nothing of the mysteries of the nether world, except that eternal justice

accords every being its due meed or its due punishment. Had not Moses warned the students of the *Torah* not to search into things destined to remain unrevealed?

“A moon bright as a transparent crown jewel filled the weird landscape with magic lustre and my heart with indefinable longing. Was it the nightingale? Only a bird of Eden could pour forth melody so sweet, cadence so thrilling, so heart-healing. Yet sweeter and holier than the song of the winged worshipper was the choral hymn sung in the peace of a blessed eve by heaven-inspired souls in yearning love for the One whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.”

THE LEGEND OF THE B'NAI MOSHEH

“THAT night little time was given to sleep. The wailings of the reprobate ghosts had left an echo in the chambers of my memory, and a cheerless picture of the Sambation hovered before my thought. Gray dawn found me on my feet, and on issuing from the bower assigned me, I was greeted by a group of singing virgins garbed in multicolored robes, woven of imperishable flowers, and they placed on my head a wreath of unfading roses prepared in my honor. Then each of the cherubic maidens kissed my forehead, withdrawing with modesty to admit a delegation come to consult with me about the best means to afford help to the dispersed sons of Judah, in whose behalf I had spoken to them.

“After earnest deliberation the conclusion was reached that, as in olden times Moses had been the lawgiver, leader, and emanci-

pator of the chosen people, so his lineal descendants were his legitimate heirs in the great work, the Tribes being ready to follow whithersoever they might lead. It was, therefore, suggested that, as it was in my power to traverse the Sambation by virtue of the Great Name, I should hasten to familiarize the B'nai Mosheh with the sorrowful situation of their brethren in exile, appeal to them for help, and assure them of the alacrity of the Tribes to be led against the foes of God and humanity.

"A better result I had not anticipated. Perfectly pleased with the proposition, I declared my readiness to enter upon my journey to the Sambation, determined, as I was, to penetrate into Inner Eden. Prayers were offered for my safety, and a solemn service was held in celebration of the memorable event. An escort of honor was appointed to accompany me as far as the forbidding zone allowed them to advance, and blessings were wafted after me, as, inspired by the Great Name that glowed in my memory, I turned my back

on the Titanic descendants of the Ten Tribes.

"As on high mountains vegetation ceases at a certain height, at a line marked by the intrusion of sterile scenery, gray boulders, and a chaos of wild rocks rising in promiscuous disorder; so on approaching the hitherto untraversed zone, I beheld the rocky skeleton of the earth protruding in enormous piles, black as pitch, leaving yawning chasms between torn cliffs, which emitted mephitic odors and death fumes, such as our patriarch must have inhaled on the shores of the pestiferous lake that covered Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Here my escort thought it proper to return, and I found myself alone in a dismal labyrinth, not a breeze to disturb the deadly atmosphere, not a sound to break the awful silence. Wrapped in my mantle, the Great Name graven in my mind, I proceeded.

"My progress was greatly impeded by the chaotic ruggedness of the region, towering rocks, precipices steep as walls, and bottom-

less pits intercepting my course. With every step I paced through thicker gloom, dense fogs veiling in hazy twilight the desolate stretches before me and to my right and left, the whole impressing the mind with the dread of an active volcano in momentary suspense. With daring bound I cleared many a chasm, pushing onward in air saturated with noxious gases. Presently the stillness was broken by distant rumbling as of an approaching storm. I knew it to be the roar of the Sambation's terrific waterfalls, barring the entrance to Inner Eden. The Great Name glowing in my soul, I advanced fearlessly, feeling that nothing could betide me so long as my faith was unshaken.

"The thunders of the vast cataracts convulsed the air far and wide, as if the bolts of heaven were casting their wrath on the unblessed river. Led by the deafening noise, I groped my way through darkness, undismayed by the terrific peals which seemed to rend the earth.

"At last I stood before an appalling abyss,

reaching to the very core of the globe, a seething whirlpool in frantic agitation, roaring and swallowing itself in madness. From an unfathomed deep, like lava bursting from a furious crater, a tremendous volume rose, fuming, and boiling, and wheezing, and cracking, and leaping, and bursting madly over a maze of sulphurous precipices, which broke its furious career, and sent the grim flood into black hollows to be lost in rayless gulfs. Such is one of the gates of Shëol through which the doomed reprobates are permitted to ascend at the approach of each Sabbath, relieved from doing penance during the divinely consecrated day.

"In this fearful desolation I wandered about for many hours, straining my eyes to discern what was beyond the cataracts and watching my chance to cross the tempestuous river. The flare of a piercing light dazzled my sight, when I sent a penetrating look athwart the grim tide. What monster sweeping through space yonder overpowered my imagination, and almost caused my heart to stand still? On a huge axis

of glowing steel I perceived a prodigious wheel of flaming swords, each blade as vast and lurid as a comet, revolve with the velocity of lightning, darting forth streams of dazzling sparks, out-thundering the thunders of the Sambation, and covering a vast circle cut through a massive rock as black as dense night. One might as well think of leaping over the moon as of passing through that whirling blaze of steel and fire. Here was the wonder of creation.

“Could it be here that Alexander Magnus had knocked for admission, and that, according to the Talmudic legend, an eye typifying his insatiate greed had been thrown out unto him? The great conqueror was told that ‘only the righteous enter here.’ Alexander asked the Synhedrion to explain to him what the eye signified. He was told to weigh it by putting all the treasures at his disposal in the other scale. The eye could not be outbalanced until a handful of dust was thrown thereon. Then the pan in which it lay rose, indicating that man’s greed ends with his life. How could

the royal heathen have found his way hither? Impossible. The tale was an allegory. He had never come near the awful gate beyond which the chosen of the chosen dwell. But might it not have happened on a Sabbath, when the Sambation relaxes its terrors?

"Thus pondering on matters past and present, I strode along the bank of the mad river in the hope of discovering a fordable point. Every turn of the tide showed new dangers, the waters being in fierce revolt, as it were, against any creature that attempted a passage, unless by divine interposition. But was not I favored, being permitted to stand where I stood? How could I doubt the all-controlling power of the Ineffable Name?

"At last my attention was attracted by a dark interspace, stretching for many a league between two cataracts, the one above precipitating its boiling volume over a steep barrier of raven black below, solid as adamant, and broken into a thousand irregular cones, sharp crests, and flooded ravines.

The eye tried in vain to penetrate the seething torrents, and the little to be discerned deterred the soul from spying into mysteries not intended for the contemplation of the righteous, but reserved for the wicked in Gehinnom.

“The flood teemed with grizzly creatures unknown among our poisonous reptiles, green-eyed, red-spotted, horned, unsightly, and armed with the weapons of the most destructive monsters. Their terrible nature was betrayed by voracity that impelled them to devour each other, and their dimensions and repugnant outlines were rendered visible by a species of crustacea whose eyes glared like burning coal. No sooner did they catch sight of me than, forgetting their voracious greed for one another, they made a dash toward the bank, some leaping out of their element. I thought of the Great Name, and they slunk away before the beam of my gaze.

“At this moment an irresistible impulse emboldened me to traverse the river. My eyes turned prayerfully to heaven, I de

scended to the brink of the rolling tide, spread my mantle on the water, and, closing my eyes and fixing my thought on the Great Name burning in my soul, stepped on the outspread garment. A soothing influence seemed to control the boisterous flood.

"How long I drifted on the water I cannot tell. When I opened my eyes, I found myself on the other side, and, marvelous to say, the wheel of steel and fire, blazing like a sun, was thundering behind me.

"My soul fed on the happy consciousness of being where no common mortal had ever been before. Afar off I discerned another range of mountains covered with vegetation, and my heart throbbed with joy at the prospect of passing the boundary of Inner Eden and communing face to face with the B'nai Mosheh. Like a deer, I bounded forward, and halted not until I stood at the foot of the noblest system of mountains under the heavens.

"A high acclivity had to be ascended, the first of an endless chain of peaks lost in

ethereal blue, thickly crowned with majestic forests, and robed in soft verdure down to the brink of a murmuring stream, which formed the dividing line between the dismal domain of the Sambation and the blessed seat of the divine Elect. A bound landed me on the other side of the transparent stream. Lighter of heart than a youth who leaps over a fence to embrace his dearest one, I skipped from height to height, until the highest peak was reached, and lo! what a panorama yonder of Eden's superb glories!

“As I descended into the paradisiacal valley, a delicious perfume apprised me that the zephyrs wafted along the heights the invisible germs of immortal life. Whithersoever the eye turned, it feasted on sights of delight, scenes of wonder, sylvan, multiflorous clusters, groves glowing with golden fruits, flowery shrubs bathed in the resplendence of the mellowest sunbeams, shedding rainbow tints on a blaze of melliferous blossoms. Here and there, amidst exuberant verdure, towered in lonely majesty lofty bowers,

cone-shaped, built by Nature's lavish bounty of intertwining leafage, shrubs, and climbing ivy, bearing flower and fruit, and walled in by Hesperian groves, in meadow, dale, and plain, often on banks of devious brooks or rills, hurrying on in berylline waves over golden sands and murmuring and tumbling in dreamy cascades.

"Back of the glorious landscape rose in dazzling radiance what looked like an imperial castle. Are there princes in Paradise? If so, what a throne must he occupy, whose palace glitters as though built of the Orient's invaluable jewels!

"While the eye was lost in the contemplation of the grand and the beautiful, the ear was charmed by a mellifluous symphony, which came floating on the soft breeze, strains undreamt of in the grosser climes we inhabit. I directed my steps toward the spot whence the harmony spread like a sweet dream. Onward I sped with the swiftness of a racer through shady alleys of cypress, palm, and myrtle, and over green as soft as velvet, exquisitely relieved by an

inexhaustible variety of floral adornments, roses of all hues, the hyacinth, the jasmine, the carnation, and the tulip, interchanging with the lily, the saffron, and scores of species no scientist has ever met in the tropics.

“In accord with the harmony of colors and the softness of the zephyr was the melody, a wave of cherubic song, entrancing the senses like a magic spell. As if in sympathy with the chorus of ineffable sweetness, a hundred shining birds swelled the divine concert with their thrilling notes.

“Drawn by the might of the choral song, I broke through thick leafage, and stood enchanted before a group of colossal figures, robed in garments of undying flowers, which reflected the tints of the rainbow. Their countenances beamed like that of their deathless progenitor, when, the decalogue in hand, he descended from Horeb, having communed forty days and nights with the Lord and His angels. In a transport of ecstasy they sang: ‘The heavens proclaim the glory of the Lord, and the firmament telleth of the work of His hands.’

"At first undiscovered, I stood overawed by the majesty of the scene. Before I realized the fact, I was one of the celestial chorus, unconsciously swelling the volume of song. I had succumbed to the resistless power of the hymn, so unlike anything I had ever heard. Yet, although my voice mixed with those of the radiant group, they continued undisturbed, apparently absorbed in the ardor of devotion.

"Angels could neither look more lovely nor sing holy hymns more sweetly than those bright habitants of Inner Eden, glorifying the Creator, free from all passion, tribulation, sorrow, anxiety, and fear of death. Here was a family of the descendants of Moses, seven blissful beings, housed in an arbor wreathed in unwithering blossoms, near a fountain as pure and blue as the sky above.

"Generations before the Tribes entered upon their miraculous adventure, the sires of these late B'nai Mosheh, inspired by a vision, had sought an asylum from oppression. In the vision the sepulchre of Moses

was revealed to them, and they were enjoined to remove the remains of the world's law-giver to the land whither his spirit should lead them. Without comprehending the mystery of the revelation, holy men searched the caverns of Mount Pisgah, and the sepulchre of the Lord's confidant was unearthed, a beam of light betraying the spot where the precious treasure lay hidden. After thirty days spent in fasting and prayer, they opened the sepulchre, and the mortal form of the *Torah's* immortal author was found in peaceful repose and perfect preservation. The body was watched with great attention, the holy men hoping to discern a sign as to what they were meant to do.

"One morning it was found that the right arm of the dead was displaced, and its index finger was pointing southward. It was concluded that the greatest prophet wanted his descendants to proceed in the direction indicated, and preparations were made for their departure toward the great sea of the South. Numberless vessels and rafts covered the placid waters of the ocean to carry the faith-

ful to a place of salvation. Thither thousands on thousands moved in endless caravans, and thither in the darkness of night and with deep secrecy the body of Moses was reverently conveyed.

"The hour of embarkation was preceded by prayer and weeping. The moment the sacred load was placed in the boat assigned it, the vessel, as if animated by a wise spirit, took to the sea. A column of fire broke from the deep empyrean, and from it shot forth an arm of light, pointing the course it was to pursue. Joy filled the hearts of the faithful, whose crafts followed the leading vessel. The heavenly manifestation was accompanied by halcyon days, sea and air combining to change a perilous adventure into a delightful voyage.

"The landing on the shores of the blessed Isle was as joyous and as wonderful an event as the passage through the Red Sea, immortalized by the songs of Moses and Miriam. Glad as they would have been to settle in the outskirts of Eden, neither the glowing column nor the flaming arm departed, until,

lured by them, the faithful wanderers traversed the Sambation, the furious river quieting down and congealing at their approach.

“Their experiences thereafter were similar to those of the Tribes. The pioneers succumbed to the mortality within them. The new-born generation were rendered immortal by the clime of their birth. Such is the tradition current among them.

“At the close of the sacred hymn one of the group turned his brilliant eyes on my diminutive self, and his discovery was signalized by an exclamation of surprise, such as a boy utters at sight of a curious object. Presently the others had their looks focussed on me. Without betraying the least hesitation, one of the male giants raised me a hundred feet above the ground, and, setting me down on his broad palm, addressed me in melodious Hebrew:

“‘If thou, strange creature, hast power of speech, tell us who thou art, and whether we may do aught for thee, favored to be among us, the descendants of Moses.’

“In answer, I gave an account of myself,

and stated my mission, asking to be presented to the leader or the prince of Eden. They had no leader, I was informed, one inhabitant being equal to the other, but they often met and appointed one to lead them in prayer, the one thus honored being high priest for the time.


"Israel's tragic tale, as I told it, impressed them as it had the descendants of the Tribes on the other side of the Sambation. But sorrow was not permitted to bide long in their realm of bliss. In one of their bowers I was served with whatever Eden provides for its denizens, and hospitably entertained. The news of my coming was spread by two of the blessed family, so that the next morning a host of the Elect gathered around the habitation which harbored me, a glorious galaxy of superhuman beings, supernal beauty radiating from every countenance.

"My appearance attracted every eye. Again, in order to be conveniently heard, I was raised to a great height. Once more the sight of the dazzling castle caught and

chained my attention. To my inquiry about the stupendous structure shining like the sun, they replied that it was a perfect, vastly magnified, and superbly beautified reproduction of Solomon's Temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and rebuilt by an angel's hand.

"In its court, between the altar and the laver, the trees of knowledge and eternal life spread their branches to unmeasured height. The fruit on the tree of knowledge shows resemblance to a child's perfect head, hiding within the mystery of the human brain; that of eternal life bears the shape of the human heart, symbolizing the good and the pure harbored in the centre of man's being. On both trees the leaves shine like enameled gold, each leaf being large enough to screen a thousand people from the heat of the sun, and displaying in letters of ever-changing light the purport of the Ten Commandments.

"Midway between the two trees is a domed edifice of burnished gold, its walls incrustated with the most precious stones



set in the shape of Hebrew letters, which spell out the contents of the *Torah*. Here, the two tables of the covenant in his hand, his staff bearing the Great Name at his side, Moses rests on a bed that shines like the most brilliant star in the Zodiac. His lips move with delight whenever his teachings are uttered anywhere, that is, they move forever. Over his head, in radiant letters, the words blaze: 'The Eternal, the Eternal, a God of Mercy.'

"Thither I was led, and was shown many things that I am unable to describe. When we issued from the inner recesses of the Sanctuary, I felt relieved of the intense awe that had possessed me within. We emerged upon the outer courts, where, at the signal of one appointed to lead in worship, a hymn was given out for all to join in. Uplifted as the descendants of Moses are at all times, they are enraptured whenever the divine career of their progenitor is dwelt upon by one of the inspired brotherhood. Glad was I to find myself again beyond the precincts of the Temple,

its holy magnificence, as well as the awful reverence of my guides, having thrilled me to the very core of my being.

"The time had come for me to recite the epic of our unparalleled martyrdom, and I awakened to the full consciousness of my self-imposed mission. My only anxiety was to rise to the great occasion. . Whether the subject or the blessed atmosphere inspired me, I am unable to tell. However, I felt that my eloquence carried the contagion of intense emotion to my hearers. There was no audible expression of feeling, but when the last word fell from my lips, sympathetic eyes turned skyward, and tears rolled down cheeks never before moistened by the liquid pearls of earthly woe.

"The response from on high was instantaneous. The sun faded, leaving an after-glow on a dense mass of gold-edged clouds. The momentary twilight was immediately dispersed by a billow of white flame, which broke from the cerulean background, and was greeted with the joyous exclamation: 'Elijah, Elijah, Elijah!'

"To save my sight from the blinding effect of the effulgence, I sought shelter behind a pile of impenetrable green, pulled my mantle over my face, and recalled the star-spelt Name as revealed to me after my probatory season. The others likewise fell prostrate on their faces, lest they be consumed by the seraphic power.

"Hear me, ye blessed scions of Moses! Hidden in mystery is His design, destined to be revealed in the course of countless cycles. His plans are immutable, and His means are as just as His wisdom is inscrutable. Therefore, pray not for the repeal of His decrees. Human suffering is not the infliction of Divine wrath. Sorrow is sent on earth to spiritualize the soul engrossed with perishable things. Let Israel rejoice at being God's chosen bearer of Sinai's Message in the nether world. He who reaches out for the triple crown of the Law, the priesthood, and spiritual sovereignty must suffer, that his mettle may be tried. His is the triumph who sacrifices ease of body to the concerns of the soul. The angels weep,

and the demons laugh, when they who deify a Jew despise the kindred of their Redeemer. But man errs, and err he will, until the light of Sinai and Carmel is the light of the world. Till then it is glory enough to be the martyr of the world.'

" 'The martyr of the world !' echoed myriad voices in Eden, as Elijah closed his exhortation. To my ear it sounded like the distant roar of a host vibrating through space.

" On recovering from my fright, I removed the mantle from my head to find that I was sweeping through ethereal heights in the chariot of the supernal messenger. A solemn voice warned me to utter no sound, whatever the vision vouchsafed unto me. Scarcely had the warning been given, when the East appeared to divide, revealing an arch a thousand times the size and splendor of the rainbow. Through its periphery flowed a stream of such light as totally eclipsed the stars, laying bare the awful deeps and wonders of immensity. From the immeasurable abysses of space, preceded by

a heavenly symphony, which evoked response from all the constellations, glided forth the Ineffable Glory, filling the unbounded universe with divine beauty.

"I beheld what human speech cannot utter. Ether teemed with infinite hosts of angels of high and low estate. Above these a myriad squadrons of seraphim enwheeled the highest and holiest chariot, surmounted by the eternal throne. The countless billions of humanity buried since the beginning of things rose transfigured from the dust, a blessed host of airy forms covering the world from end to end and taking station on river, lake, and sea, as if waters were as substantial as earth. Responding to the empyrean concert, they sang, and they shone in the reflex of unutterable majesty. Infinity seemed an endless ocean of light and bliss. Numberless as are the stars visible to the eye, they are but few compared with the mazes of teeming constellations I was deigned worthy to see, rising host on host, to immeasurable heights and in unfathomed deeps, with the *Merchabah* as

the all-controlling centre. A something within me caused me to feel that I, too, was as light as air, and an irrepressible impulse prompted me to join the supernal choirs. My soul told me that I was akin to heavenly light and fire, and the sense of this kinship was intense felicity. Why not throw myself among my kindred spirits, and sweep along forever among the blessed galaxies? No sooner did this thought possess me than, with a superhuman effort, I darted out of the celestial chariot, and dropped, like an ærolite, out of my transcendental reverie. Before me stood the Kabbalist.

“‘Go home, son, now that, by virtue of the over-soul which my prayer called down for thee, thou hast seen what thy soul was longing for. What man works, yearns, and prays for, God grants him in time. Neither Eden nor Abaddon are dreams. The soul is open to them here; they are open for the soul hereafter. Ask no questions. Farewell.’

“Turning round, he passed away like a shadow in the twilight, for the last trace of

the sun's afterglow had faded. I dashed my hand across mine eyes to convince myself that I was not asleep, but even now I am still in doubt whether it was a vision or an actual revelation."





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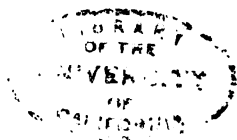
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